

PRIMAL MOTHERING

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“We know nothing ‘til
intuition agrees.”

Richard Bach

Chapter One

PRIMAL MOTHERING...Birthing a New Humanity

“Women have millions of years of genetically-encoded
intelligences, intuitions, capacities, knowledges,
powers, and cellular knowings of exactly what to do
with the infant.” Joseph Chilton Pearce

The modern world has made a token of the word “natural.” In fact, very little of modern humanity could be described as natural. Just because modern living and thinking practices are prevalent and therefore considered normal, that doesn’t mean they are natural.

Thus, I have chosen the term “primal” as opposed to “natural” to refer to the innate wisdom that transcends transitory theories and maintains its integrity, despite the trends of the day. No matter what is done to the tree, it is the tree’s roots which will ensure its future. And so it is with primal mothering, for its roots will save humanity when the storms of social trial and error have stripped all but the infinite wisdom which rests securely in female intellect.

This book is a wake-up call aimed at stirring your primal knowledge about mothering. The ideas you read about in this book are neither prevalent nor

are they normal. In fact, they smell of heresy to those interested in maintaining the status quo. However, if your mothering instincts scream silently in pain while your actions hesitatingly follow in the wake of social consciousness, then I hope to bring you home to yourself. If, for instance, you are frustrated by society's message that, in these busy, modern times, children are expected to be neither seen nor heard; if you wonder why the physically-challenged minority in our society have been heard to the tune of public access, while mothers being a majority continue to struggle with over-sized toilet seats for their young in public bathrooms, NO KIDS/NO PETS rental ads in newspapers, and a host of other discriminations, this book is for you. Yes, this book is radical. These guiding principles represent the roots of mothering that place of entrance where nutrients converge to feed the tree in its entirety. Black Elk once delivered a message which reminds us, "It may be that some little root of the sacred tree still lives. Nourish it then, that it may leaf and bloom and fill with singing birds." Though buried deeply from view in this modern age, the

instincts of women are alive nonetheless. One layer at a time, we find ourselves again and, in doing so, we will put humanity back on track. We will once again be free to be our true selves, teachers of love to a species so easily led astray.

With the courage to admit, accept, and embrace our position as primal mothers, we automatically become recipients of inner peace as the little girl of us merges with our womanhood. Primal mothering is like walking barefoot in a meadow of wildflowers. It brings us alive, awakens us from the dismal dreariness of social consciousness, and relieves us of the guilt and remorse that so often accompany decisions based in compromise.

Primal mothering touches our soul in a way that modern mothering methods cannot. Primal mothering makes powerful women out of us because we flex muscles that otherwise atrophy in the name of social acceptance. We question authority, and then become the authors of our own mothering careers, our own lives. By defending Nature, we guarantee our children

their right to a natural unfolding.

This is not a text-book of intellectual theory but rather, an invocation of what you already know. But the paradox with instincts is that, though we are born with them, we must be exposed to the daily rhythm of their reality in order to activate and maintain that knowledge within ourselves. For instance, if women around us are not breastfeeding or bonding with their young, the wake-up call to our own primal mothering is muffled and we can easily fall prey to such practices as bottle-feeding and mother-infant separation.

We must silence the social chatter so we may hear the different drummer, the urge in our hearts that cries “mother and child togetherness.” I am reminded of the story Jonathan Livingston Seagull where it was said, “He spoke of very simple things, that it is right for a gull to fly, that freedom is the very nature of his being, that whatever stands against that freedom must

be set aside, be it ritual or superstition or limitation in any form.”

Listening to ourselves and then taking action on the wisdom from within can be a scary endeavor as we become vulnerable to attack by family members, husbands, friends, religious leaders, medical workers, and others who disagree with us. Laura Kaplan Shanley, author of *Unassisted Childbirth* writes, “When we decide to take our lives into our own hands, we must be prepared to encounter resistance. There will always be those who believe we are not qualified to do so.” Opposition strikes when we least expect it, and it is only conviction to our instincts that pulls us through moments of social disapproval.

One afternoon, while pushing a cart through the produce section of my neighborhood grocery store, the manager looked up and, upon noticing my baby tucked securely against me in a baby sling barked, “Hey, why don’t you put your baby in the front of the cart where she belongs?” I said that

she was fine and happy to be next to me, to which he replied, “Spoiled baby!” I was holding a bunch of overly-ripe bananas as he spoke those words, raised them to his face, and showed him the true definition of spoiled.

According to Webster’s Dictionary, spoil means “to harm severely, to ruin, to impair the quality of, to become unfit for use.” When people tell us we are spoiling our young, in the very moment that we are adhering to our mothering instincts and giving them exactly what they need, we are torn between their “expert” opinion and our innate knowing. Unfortunately, one criticism can throw us off and leave us questioning virtually every aspect of our mothering career. It takes a great deal of conscious contact with our primal intuition to hold steady in times of judgment. We all know fruit only spoils when it is neglected, when it is left to rot, when it is not enjoyed fully at the ripe stage. Looking back at this definition of spoiled, could that more accurately be describing the sad results of children who have not

been raised under the wing of a primal mother?

Primal mothering is an adventure in commitment. It leads us through corridors past, present, and future. I cringe when, during times of guiding my children, I hear myself sound like my parents. When this happens, I commit to the inner healing necessary for me to erase those unhealthy parenting tapes learned from my own past. I rise to the occasions of the present, knowing the power to handle all situations resides in me. And I celebrate my role in the future, where all of my efforts will be played out in the generations to come.

Societal disapproval is something we must become immune to as we draw nearer to the gentle prodding of our mothering instincts. Social pressure may be applied by family members, husbands, friends, neighbors, community leaders, churches, medical authorities, state laws, government policy, and even worse our own minds due to all this cultural conditioning. Taking

flight means to loosen our burdens by learning to obey our hearts while turning down the volume on society. Whether overt or covert, there's always somebody who challenges our determination to self-govern.

I remember the time I gave my power away to a police officer. One night, while seven months pregnant, I had a tire blow-out on the way home. I pulled over and, without benefit of flashlight, began the challenging task of trusting myself to change my own tire. A policeman drove up just as I was loosening the last lug nut, preparing to feel the victory of my efforts. I kindly refused his offer of help, but HE refused to honor my decision to fix the tire myself. My personal goal finally gave way to his authoritarian insistence...he finished changing the tire.

When he drove off, I felt ripped off. A challenge designed to empower me had fizzled down to concern for the macho image of a uniformed cop. Given my lifelong lessons in social obedience and protecting the male ego,

it's no wonder that I couldn't muster up the courage to send that police officer on his way.

This obedience to authority is especially practiced by women in the realm of medicine. Doctors tell us what to do, when to do it, how long to do it, and when to stop. It's a pelvic gold-mine for medical profiteers, guised in the belief that we, as women, know next to nothing about meeting the needs of our pregnancies, our births, our babies, and the ongoing needs of our young.

On Easter morning twelve years ago, I enacted my own ascension by deciding to take back my life and my health. I discarded my servile behavior and walked away from an existence previously controlled by societal pressure. What next? I felt free, but fragile. After all, I had not been conditioned to think for myself, to listen to my innermost voice, or to trust my instincts. I began a search for the answers to my questions. I

left college and traveled south until I happened upon the poverty-stricken sidewalks of a Mexican village where I nearly tripped over a mother who was sitting on the curb nursing her young.

In front of this mother/child couple rested an old tin can serving as a collection plate to be hopefully filled by generous passers-by. When I put a quarter into that can and heard the clinking sound of metal against metal, I suddenly awoke from a deep sleep which had defined my life experience up to that point. In that moment, my mission in life stared me in the face as the song “Mother and Child Reunion” floated gently across my psyche. I was observing human symbiosis; mother needing baby as much as baby needs mother.

This lesson in mother-child interaction stayed with me to serve as a cornerstone when, just one year later, while walking down a sidewalk, not in Mexico but Oklahoma, my then-husband insisted I put our newborn into day-

care so I could go back to work. With the vehemence of a she-bear, I growled back at him, “I will stand on this street-corner collecting coins before putting my baby in day-care!” Twelve years and three children later, I’m still committed to obeying my heart and my “tin can” is always within reach, should I need it.

I always keep my eye on the mark, that place in time years down the road when I will look back and feel good about my mothering decisions. Five years ago, in the midst of a natural disaster, I was given the opportunity to take inventory and determine if intuitive integrity had indeed ruled my choices in mothering. Hurricane Iniki swept over our small island of Kauai like the hand of destruction in a hurry and, with children in my arms and the roof ready to fly, death seemed a near certainty. Rising above the fear and anguish, like a phoenix from the ashes, came the scent of sweet serenity embracing me, as it had for the poverty-stricken mother I saw in that tiny Mexican village a decade prior. I had honored my mothering

instincts at every turn, and regret did not accompany me in these supposed final moments of life.

When we tend to the needs of our young we are, in fact, nurturing ourselves. We have the great benefit of feeling good about who we have been for our children. Primal mothering is its own reward. Turning inside ourselves, over and over again with each choice we make, our convictions lead us to levels of serenity which no amount of materialism or social approval can reach. Following our hearts comes more easily when we have an understanding of the social myths surrounding mothering; myths which have silenced our souls up until now. In returning to the realness that exists inside the world of primal mothering, we can see the ridiculousness of these myths which have been driving women away from their heartfelt knowledge for too many years now.

One myth that reflects “modern” choices in mothering, as opposed to the

primal touch, is the idea that children are expensive. Building the financial bank account prior to conception is fine, but certainly not a prerequisite to entering motherhood. If we wait for all the conditions to be right, we may not get started onto our path of mothering when we intuitively hear the call. When we break free from following social beliefs that otherwise lead to doctor and hospital bills, plastic carrying devices, baby furniture, infant formula, jarred baby food, disposable diapers, and day-care, we are freed-up to look with enthusiasm to the glowing benefits of being with and raising the children who come through us, rather than grappling with finances. Primal mothering offers equal biological rights to children born into rags or riches. Outwitting poverty comes easy for those of us viewing life choices from the context of true need, thus minimizing daily stress and teaching healthy human values to our offspring.

Swimming upstream against social consciousness is indeed challenging, but the paradox of upstream mothering is that the elements of it are

downstream and easy. For instance, forgetting formula feedings and instead engaging our milk-producing breasts makes the difference between the chore of preparing bottles in the middle of the night not to mention having to hold the bottle upright until our babies are finished and cleaning the bottles come morning or pulling our infants closer to nurse at our breasts without either ourselves or our babies having to come fully awake.

For many women in our society who want to raise children, waiting for all the conditions to be right includes the notion “First comes love, then comes marriage, then comes baby in a baby carriage.” In truth, at least one third of all babies in our culture are born out-of-wedlock, and fully half of American mothers are raising their children single-handed. Prior to my career in mothering, I was frightened at the idea of single parenting. But I soon realized a clash was taking place between my mothering instincts and the expectations that existed inside my marriage. I had to make a decision. I decided single parenting was a necessary step toward my deepening

commitment to primal mothering, and soon realized it was far more soul-enriching to raise my child without a partner than it was to lose sight of my mothering instincts for the sake of appeasing a man.

As is always the case with following my heart, primal mothering has been my ticket to personal growth. Codependency recovery has followed each decision that embraced my mothering instincts. I've had to learn the art of nurturing myself and meeting the needs of my children instead of automatically and obligingly taking care of a man. I've had to steal away in the middle of the night to enter the nearest women's shelter because I finally agreed it's not acceptable to be hit and verbally abused by my partner. And, while in those women's shelters, I've watched the way mothers feel guilty for tending to their own needs, and feel confused about what their children's needs really are. I have also seen how unimportant those combined needs are to many authority figures.

One night, a young woman entered the back kitchen door of that women's shelter bruised and bleeding with both a newborn and a toddler dangling from her weary arms. After helping her lull those beautiful babies to sleep, we helped her to calm down. She began to feel the safety of the shelter. As she sipped a warm cup of tea and soothed herself with a deep heaving cry, the phone in the hallway began to ring. It was the police headquarters. The officers were upset because this woman's husband the man who had beat her just an hour prior was ranting and raving in the police station, demanding to know where his wife was and refusing to leave. When the shelter staff member explained the young woman's recent abusive experience, the officer coldly replied, "Well, tell her to get ready to leave because we're on our way to get her. We're not going to have this guy causing trouble around here all night!"

Less than fifteen minutes later, uniformed policemen were at that supposedly safe kitchen door and the battered woman grabbed up her sleeping babies

and obediently left the shelter, only to head back out into the storm of domestic violence.

Domestic violence is deadly. More women die at the hands of their partners than we can possibly imagine. For many more, their plight doesn't show up in the statistics because the scars don't necessarily show on the surface of their bodies. Emotional abuse is the internal injury of domestic violence. Women must become empowered enough to first identify the abuse and defend themselves by seeking an environment of physical safety, then learn to avoid relationships and situations which are non-supportive of both their needs and the needs of their young. We may need to accept the reality that a generation or two of children will be fatherless, as each gender faces and follows through with necessary healing for healthy human interactions.

Addiction recovery, breaking past codependency issues, inner child healing

these are the tools which light the way to a future of healthier family systems. Until then, the primal mothering needs of our young continue to exist and we can embrace this responsibility with a sense of determination and pride.

Because so many women find themselves struggling to get free from relationship dysfunction, a growing percentage of mothers and children are financially dependent on government programs. Welfare reform is an important step toward building healthier families, but not the kind of reform we so often hear about. Getting mothers out into the work-force and babies into daycare does not nurture the seeds of mother/child togetherness. I propose that welfare reform consist of leading women to recovery from dysfunctional relationships via methods in both personal counseling and group support, as well as instilling the art of financial independence by developing entrepreneurial skills for creating home businesses, and guaranteed business loans for implementing those businesses, thus protecting

and honoring the mother/child bond. In my book *Anatomy of an Accomplishment*, I touch more in-depth upon the need to tap into our deeper talents without sacrificing the primal needs of our children.

For much of my mothering career I elected to use the welfare system according to the vision I saw for myself and my family. I gratefully accepted public assistance while at the same time working diligently on my codependency recovery, developing my dance, writing books and offering health consultation, as well as building my baby sling business in an effort to create personal empowerment and a solid financial base. Though my children were fatherless during those lean years, they were in the company of a mother who was striving for healthier relationships with men; they were observing the healing process of an emerging woman rather than enduring the hurtful cycle of a submissive mother. While my daughters were exposed to the rare dynamic of feminine self-care, my little son was learning

to appreciate his feminine side and thus all women.

Finding time to nurture myself as well as my children is a juggling act which turns out to be easy simply because it is so necessary. When I take care of everybody else and neglect myself, everyone else eventually suffers. So I have learned how important it is, to find moments here and there, even minutes and hours when family slumber rolls around, to recharge and remember all the inner work that awaits me. Time management becomes a mother's best friend, as we balance out the many roles and responsibilities each day presents. As any mother well knows, random interruption is a component of the production process. Writing this book is a perfect example of what I am talking about. These last few paragraphs were interspersed with wiping a baby's bottom, cutting up oranges, nursing someone to sleep, putting away play-dough, and rewinding a children's tape.

When my third child Matthew was still an infant I kept a wide array of self-

realization books on my writing table, strategically located next to my stuffed rocker where he would nurse, where my toddler would cuddle with me, and where my older daughter would sit on the arm of the chair while we homeschooled. When my lap wasn't filled with my offspring, it became a serving platter for all the inspirational books that healed me to the core, clawing away at what character traits were impeding both my personal growth and the quality of my mothering experience. I called it "Bittersweet Mothering" because of the combination of clearing the wreckage of my own past while assisting in the formation of a future generation, thus giving my children the primal mothering I never had.

Togetherness is the key factor. It is the cornerstone to the primal mothering experience. Trust and security are natural outgrowths of an unbroken bond. In today's society, where mother and child separation is the norm, mothers who obey their instincts and remain bonded to their babies are often looked upon as over-protective, martyristic, and downright

neurotic. Courage and creativity become faithful companions to the mother who clings to her newborn, turns her back on social norm, and further relishes in the round-the-clock presence of her growing children.

People are always asking me how I can tolerate being around my children all the time. I have a hard time answering them because I don't understand the question. My instinct to remain connected to the primal needs of my children is as natural to me as drawing the next breath.

When I first began submitting articles to various magazines and making baby slings for the promotion of bonding, I was nurturing both my dream to be a writer and my determination to finance my family's needs minus the many-fold expenses of "going away" to a job. I was polishing my tin can, so to speak.

Though my housing came to an abrupt halt as a result of my choosing to

live in our car over separating from my baby for the sake of earning rent money, I continued feeding the dream of writing and attaining financial independence while maintaining vigilance to family togetherness. Many of my eventually published mothering articles were written by candlelight, late at night, as I sat in the back-seat of my old Chevy Impala while my toddler slept peacefully in the front. And by day I stopped every pregnant woman and mother/baby couple I saw, demonstrating the wonderful benefits of baby-wearing and selling slings along the way.

Some days were harder than others in those first years of mothering.

When my only certainty resided in honoring my mothering instincts while all else in my life spelled confusion, I turned to Nature, the mother of us all for a vision quest of two to four days up on a mountain, alongside a river, or deep in the woods just me, my daughter, a jug of water, and open ears which listened attentively to my inner voice. Sometimes I referred to spiritual recipes handed down by my favorite authors. Once, when confused

about how to financially survive upon reaching my ultimate goal of moving to Hawaii, I performed one of my favorite exercises in self-discovery that I learned from the book *Illusions*. In this beautifully profound story of the reluctant Messiah, author Richard Bach wrote about turning any piece of literature into a magic book. He said, “You can do it with any book. You can do it with an old newspaper, if you read carefully enough.

Haven’t you done that, hold some problem in your mind, then open any book handy and see what it tells you?” I grabbed the closest book and let it fall open. With my eyes closed, I put my finger on a page and then, in search of meaning to my confusion, I proceeded to read the particular paragraph I was pointing to.

I could hardly believe my eyes! In this book about the spiritual journey of a powerful woman called Peace Pilgrim, she was using this exact paragraph to describe the time she went to Hawaii and slept on the beaches of each island. She wrote about the beauty and peace of the people she met, and

that safety from harm is a condition we create by virtue of our thoughts and expectations whatever we think about expands. Reading this excerpt calmed my fears and further readied me for my upcoming journey.

Years before I heeded the call to become a mother, I had glimpses of the path that awaited me. In my twenties, while working as a burlesque dancer in the nightclubs of Seattle I was continually plagued by the question, “When I decide to be a mother some day, who will hold my baby while I’m on stage?” Obviously a smokey strip joint is no place for a baby, but the question in my mind back then made clear one important point: I was destined and determined to remain with my young when motherhood became my reality. My primal connection to mother-child togetherness was so potent that it out-shined the rules of society surrounding me.

And, years later, when mothering became a reality in my life, togetherness was simply a given. As a result of this instinctive conduct, my children and

I have experienced homeless shelters, living in tents, living in and traveling in cars...but we've not chosen separation, so separation has not been our experience. Needless to say, we enjoy a rich volume of memories as a result of our choices. Like that Christmas Eve of 1991, in a two-person dome tent on the sands of a Hawaiian beach, homeschooling one child while pregnant with another.

I don't believe there is ever a time when we are denied the opportunity to live up to our mothering instincts. After all, the only thing that shatters dreams is compromise. We may have our imagination stretched beyond measure, but so are the rewards beyond measure not only to ourselves and to our children, but to the generations ahead who represent the peaceful fruition of children raised according to the expectations of Nature.

If we hear ourselves saying, "I'd really like to be home with my children but..." then maybe being home with our children has lost its place on our

list of priorities. I recall a friend crying one evening while nursing her four-week-old daughter. When I asked what was wrong she sadly replied, “I have to wean my baby because I need to go back to work in two weeks.” Mind you, this woman was a lactation consultant for the government WIC program an agency specifically designed to encourage women to breastfeed! I assured her that other options existed and enthusiastically offered alternatives until she curtly interrupted me by saying, “I have to go back to work because I love fine clothes, expensive jewelry, and my new four-bedroom house.” When I suggested she take her daughter to work with her, she quickly changed the subject.

Necessary trade-offs are a constant theme in the life of women who choose primal mothering; shifting priorities from possessing material things to instead having family togetherness, and mustering up the courage to traverse across lifestyles unimaginable to the general public.

Courage is the mental or moral strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear, or difficulty. What a gift, to show our children that they win out over things which prove to be ephemeral in the long run, like for instance making payments on a new car.

One family I met had this credo they refused to pay more than three hundred dollars for a vehicle, and they did no auto repairs on the cars they bought. When the car died, they simply called the wrecking yard to tow it away, caught a cab home then proceeded to locate another vehicle for under three hundred dollars. As each car seemed to average a life-span of about one year, they kept their yearly transportation costs far below what they would have faced if hooked into the need for fancier transportation.

The irony I have had the pleasure of knowing is the fact that, with my cornerstone of family togetherness firmly in place, all of my personal desires still come to fruition. With conviction and creativity, I have managed to

finish my college education with my first-born in a baby sling, give lectures to large audiences with a toddler playing at my feet, and run a home business writing books and making baby slings while homeschooling three children.

It's easier to play the role of a victim and have excuses for why we can't do what we want than it is to accept responsibility for turning our wishes into reality. In the words of James Allen, "The greatest achievement was at first and for a time a dream. The oak sleeps in the acorn; the bird waits in the egg; and in the highest vision of the soul a waking angel stirs. Dreams are the seedlings of realities." We are mothers with a mission, but we are also people with a purpose. My book *Anatomy of an Accomplishment* is designed to help us remember our underlying purpose on the planet that we may become fully functioning artists in our own lives. As females, our nurturing skills go beyond the immediate mothering experience. The fate of humanity depends on the female intellect in all of its capacities.

Feeding our talents while fueling the future generation is a balancing act which leaves us feeling elated and soul-satisfied. Women have been expected to make a choice rather than nurture both their children and their calling. The truth of the matter is that our world needs the impact of female intelligence just as much as our children need primal mothering throughout a given day. Joseph Chilton Pearce proclaims, “God knows we need women in our politics and our medical places. We need some of that base intelligence there in every walk of life.” Women belong wherever they want to be, in whatever capacity they can best serve humanity, and children have a right to be with mom.

We need to take back our babies, our lives, our minds, and our bodies.

The medical establishment has built a financial empire by relying heavily on their female clients. And somehow we have come to depend solely on these “experts” for such natural practices as pregnancy, birthing, and caring

for our young. An even sadder thing about this displacement of power is that some women have put so much of their faith in the medical establishment they actually dissuade other females from taking back their primal power. I remember the deluge of unsupportive mail I received from readers of a particular newsletter I wrote for, after the publication of my story about choosing an unassisted birth after my previous C-section. The editor of the periodical had ended my article with a plea to her readers to discourage me from my “irresponsible” decision to birth alone.

There are plenty of people who find it their duty to keep us obedient to social limitation, but nothing can stop the woman who has glimpsed her power as a primal mother. Those of us who feel this rebellion towards modern mothering practices lay rationalization theory aside and increase the volume on our intuition. We are not swaying to the latest convenient theory about child development but rather, we are happily humming to the tune of our own heart.

A Native American philosophy reminds us that in all deliberations we must consider the impact our decisions will make on the seventh generation from now. Primal mothering is earth-friendly; an environmentally-sound lifestyle that respects our bodies, the bodies of our children, the body of Mother Earth, and the psyche of all involved. Those of us who follow our mothering instincts literally grow up inside ourselves, imparting that primal wisdom and personal strength to our daughters while ensuring our sons a safe home called Earth where violence is unacceptable. In turn, our daughters will find it quite natural to take responsibility for their mothering choices rather than let society dictate rules which don't reflect the true needs of their young. By the seventh generation, primal mothering, the natural way to raise humanity, will become normal and prevalent.

This book will change the course of humanity by bringing mothers and their offspring back into daily harmony. Women looking within, transforming within

and then, by collective effort, transforming our species. This book is for all women, single or with partner because the true, primal needs of our children remain the same regardless of our marital status. Mothering is about Nature, having nothing to do with our intimate attachments. Once that egg is fertilized and we feel ready to follow through, we are mother first. Our deepest attachment becomes that undying, ever-present role in the lives of dependent children the seedlings of humanity who rely on us at every turn.

Does all this sound idealistic? Does it seem impossible for the efforts of one primal mother to make a difference? Keep in mind the Hundredth Monkey concept, wherein one monkey choosing to wash her sweet potato at the river's edge caused a shift in the consciousness of monkeys on other shores. When enough people think and act a certain way, a shift in social consciousness inevitably takes place, and that's exactly what I'm advocating for the betterment of humanity. We need to roll up our sleeves and begin

washing sweet potatoes at the river's edge; we need to honor the call of primal mothering because such obedience to our instincts satisfies our hormones and nurtures the heart of future generations.

Think about this...less than a generation ago, NO SMOKING sections were basically non-existent. And handicap access was seldom a concern of the architect. Today, because enough people (and really not that many) rolled up their sleeves and started washing sweet potatoes ---so to speak --- smoke-free environments are now the norm, and an architect wouldn't think of investing time in a blueprint that did not include the needs of a physically-challenged minority.

When we decide to trust the flow that flourishes as a result of our heart-felt convictions we are assured of the coincidences that guide us on our journey. We tap into a universal language that speaks to our hearts rather than hearing social mores that speak to our fears. And the primal link

between mothers across all cultures becomes clear to us as we work together in defense of today's children and tomorrow's generations.

We are strong mothers building a gentle world. When we learn to respond to our primal mothering instincts instead of reacting to social pressure we come into our personal strength. In the book, Tao of Motherhood Vimala McClure writes, "The truly feminine mother never cringes or defers. Her strength is unshakable, like the earth upon which we walk but which can topple us with a single deep breath."

This is the generation of women taking all the time they need to heal themselves while learning to meet the needs of their young; giving children all they need to grow into humans having a life experience that doesn't require healing in the first place. Commitment is the key that turns conviction into reality. This book is my commitment to add to the literary ranks an owner's manual for those of us who occupy the feminine vehicle

and who accept the responsibility of raising humanity.

Chapter 2

PREGNANCY...Building the Baby Within

“It may be that the first stage in an effective global revolution for peace will be when male doctors accept progressively to retire from obstetrics and return childbirth to women.” Michel Odent, MD

When our female vehicle is activated into the developing role of motherhood, we are hormonally and psychically equipped for the journey. There is nothing lacking. We only need to listen closely to our inner voice and then courageously live up to what that voice is saying. A male-dominated mentality with all its medical gadgetry has driven most of us women out of hearing range of our instincts, but the primal hormones keep coursing

through us, ever-reminding we are equipped with the tools to birth humanity anew.

While stretching my body at the beach one day, a physically-fit man approached me and asked, “Where did you get your yoga training?” I had to laugh. I’ve never taken a yoga class in my life! I was simply following my body’s request for movement, as I reconnected to childhood memories and my body’s ability to resemble the likes of Gumby – capable of moving every which way and loose. The man seemed perplexed because, after years of study, he had not accomplished some of the stretching poses which came naturally to me.

And so it is with pregnancy. While the experts argue amongst any information-seeker, the majority of females around the world (human and non-human alike) go silently along from conception to birth with not a complication considered or created.

Without experts tarnishing our instincts, the primal woman in each of us can heed the inner call and simply manage to do right from start to finish. We all possess this primal instinct, and it is my goal to help you clear away the mental debris that may be separating you from this internal knowledge and wisdom that has successfully carried humanity through its entirety.

It is only the last few centuries of “expertise” which have oppressed our intuition. With such a long and impressive record of primal success resting beneath technology’s top layer of intrusion, it won’t take too much effort to un-earth the shine of primal mothering.

Part of the responsibility of mothering is recognizing when we are truly ready for the responsibility of mothering. Upon learning that we are pregnant, the first thing we need to ask ourselves is “Do I want to be pregnant?” Not every woman thrills at the sight of a urine-stick turned

YES. For whatever reason, whether we are a teen-ager who doesn't feel ready, a woman who prefers to wait, or a mother who already feels overwhelmed, we must be honest with ourselves. I, personally, have had several opportunities to practice this rigorous form of self-honesty.

As a child, I once had a dream that showed my giving birth to my first child when I turned thirty-two, after receiving a college degree in philosophy. The message in that dream stayed with me to serve as a time-line and psychological guide for the upcoming years of turbulence.

My twenties were defined by drug addiction, eating disorders, sexual promiscuity, and every other fatal bonding attempt known to the insecure mind. That decade of confusion was accompanied by several pregnancies, all of which ended in spontaneous miscarriage or abortion. Then, shortly before my 32nd birthday and in my senior year of collegiate study, six months after I had become sober and somewhat secure within myself, I

became pregnant again. With the baby's due date one month after graduation, I knew the time had come for me to step into the reality of my childhood dream.

Most women I knew had begun their mothering careers at a younger age, and there were plenty of people who expressed concern that I might face complications as a result of being in my thirties. I started connecting with other women who were still enjoying pregnancies right into their forties, and quickly overcame all concern over the timing of my pregnancy.

Today I have three children. During each of these pregnancies I used the gestation period as a time for major re-construction of my life so as to create a future which would accommodate my personal and financial needs while staying true to mother and child togetherness. I did the best I could with my outer world, knowing full well my success in that arena would pale in comparison to the joy of non-negotiable togetherness. I kept in mind the

works of Thich Nhat Nanh from the book For A Future To Be Possible.

“The wealthy are often the least able to make others happy. Only those with time can do so.”

My first-born Sarah Lee was conceived after several months of psychic interaction. She often came to me in dreams, always saying the same thing...”Get your act together, I’m on my way.” An important message indeed, for at the time I was heavily addicted to drugs and my personal life was a mess. Her insistent words jolted me into action and, by the time I became pregnant, I had six months of sobriety from drugs, lived in a nice apartment, and made enough money from my job to begin saving.

This conception pulled together all the pieces. Though I had earlier dropped out of college to follow my urge to experience Mexico where I was permanently altered by the sight of that breastfeeding mother I referred to in chapter one, I was just one semester away from completing my

undergraduate degree. I would be thirty-two years old before my baby was born, and my last abortion was accompanied by a dream telling me that my next pregnancy marked the beginning of my mothering career.

Upon learning of this pregnancy my instincts took over and I knew that city life, the high cost of living, and the stress therein were not conducive to the needs of my developing family.

I, along with my then-husband, packed up our little red Vega station-wagon and bought a small dome tent on our way out of Oklahoma City . We located a small college town along a beautiful river where our new “home” was pitched. I enrolled at the university and found work at a nearby convenience store.

Thinking ahead to what would be the most efficient and economical lifestyle for raising my baby, I decided to earn the money for a small 13-foot travel-

home and rent a small lot next to a creek at the trailer park located just across the street from the university. The affordable, cozy, and convenient living situation along with expanding education goals gave me a wonderful sense of comfort, and the cornerstone my commitment to the career of mothering held steady. Thoughts of continuing on to graduate school offered not only a strengthening of my education but also an opportunity to receive student loans which would keep my family financially afloat.

With my second pregnancy, my dream of moving to Hawaii was being nurtured. Once again, prior to conception I received nocturnal visits from this coming child. She strongly stated, “My name is Jasmine and, if you will let me come through, I promise that we will all be on an airplane headed for Hawaii by the day you are three months pregnant.”

Now I had not even been considering the idea of having another child. But I had been obsessed with the intense desire to raise Sarah Lee in Hawaii .

At the time of Jasmine's message I was without the financial means to change my living situation. We were merely living from hand to mouth. It seemed inconceivable that a move to Hawaii could materialize. Jasmine's message returned one day as I was swimming in a cold creek, trying to convince myself that Hawaii wasn't that important to me. With a faded half moon hovering overhead, I surrendered to Jasmine's encouraging push forward and that night I became pregnant.

True to the metaphysical law that the universe conspires to help those who follow their dreams, my baby sling business suddenly blossomed into a deluge of mail-orders, a friend whose son worked for the airlines got us a huge discount on two one-way tickets and, despite all my disbelief, we were on a Hawaii-bound airplane the day I turned three month's pregnant! Me, Sarah Lee, and in-utero Jasmine Kokee landed on the island of Kauai with \$84.00 in my purse and a housing invitation that would expire in three short weeks.

We bought a small dome tent (I knew I should have kept the one from my first pregnancy!) and hitch-hiked to a beautiful beach on the dry side of the island where I set up house and lived happily throughout the next six months of my pregnancy.

My third pregnancy was equally motivating. This time, I was sure I wasn't having any more children. Then came the message..."My name is Matthew and my gift to you is peace." At the time of this celestial whisper, inner peace was sorely lacking in my life. Though I was straight-up with my mission of mothering, my personal purpose was getting off-track. I had specifically moved to Hawaii to raise my children in a warm environment where fruit grew abundantly AND to write motivational health books amidst the inspiring beauty of this tropical Paradise.

I was presently off-course, hiring myself out as a writer rather than heeding

the inner call of so many projects residing in my soul. When I'm not living up to the definition of my dreams I'm stuck with a grinding anxiety that keeps inner peace at bay.

Mathew was challenging me to expand my mothering responsibilities which, in turn, turned up the desire on getting my financial/career act together.

Could I handle three children by myself? How was peace going to materialize in a situation that appeared to me to be potentially overwhelming? Then I remembered those days of dysfunction that gave way to healthier choices with the coming of Sarah Lee, as well as my skepticism when Jasmine promised Hawaii. In both cases, it all worked out once I committed to the journey.

This third pregnancy saw my writing career blossoming. Book after book resided in my soul, waiting to be brought forth in the written form. Matthew

was demanding attention to my writing goals as well as to my financial future. After all, writing books would not be just about feeding my purpose but it would also feed my family.

I wanted to set the scene for raising three children and writing books. I created our dream home a quaint cottage with a huge yard and a sweeping view of the ocean where I could comfortably grow the baby within and watch my girls play while tending to my writing career.

One of the myths about pregnancy I find rather ironic is the idea that we are now in a weakened state and need to “take it easy.” Nothing could be further from the truth. Pregnancy is a time when my life seems to be at full throttle emotionally, psychically, mentally, spiritually, and physically.

With my first child, at six months pregnant I was working as a stocker in a grocery store in the afternoons and on weekends, wrapping burritos at the local fast-food place every night, attending college full-time, swimming thirty

minutes daily, and dancing up a storm at pow wows on weekends. With my second child, I was walking as much as ten miles each day, foraging for fruit, hiking, and dancing every night on the sandy beaches of Hawaii . With my third child, I also walked several miles daily but with the added weight of two-year-old Jasmine on my back.

Sessions of exercise, especially the art of dance, gave me a chance to more intimately interact with my womb-babies. Though I had been an exotic dancer for ten years prior to mothering, and studied ballet at length during college, none of my training compared to the internship that accompanied my prenatal experiences. With each of my three pregnancies a specific dance style along with particular preferences in music proved to reflect the unique personalities of each of my emerging children.

My first daughter Sarah Lee is a powerfully psychic and extremely compassionate child whose visionary skills are beyond measure. From the

moment of conception I found myself swaying to songs like “That’s The Way Of The World” by Earth, Wind, & Fire and “Imagine” by John Lennon. As the pregnancy progressed, those songs took a back-seat to Indian drumming, and I was at every pow wow within a fifty-mile radius, dancing solid until midnight . Just hours before giving birth I was twirling and rocking to the ancient beat of the drum.

My second daughter Jasmine Kokee is capable of intriguing and teaching everyone around her, strangers and family members alike. She transcends all boundaries. How profound, that the songs I felt compelled to embrace throughout her womb-time included such feminist classics as “I Am Woman” and “You and Me against the World.” Jasmine insisted I dance several hours each night of her in-utero development. In my ninth month, when I felt too tired to participate in late-night dance vigils, my arms started itching terribly and I heard this faint voice telling me that only dancing would make the itching go away. It worked! As most of my pregnancy was spent living

out of a tent along the splendid beaches of Hawaii, I met with my tape player each night, just outside my blue cloth dome-home where I watched the water splash seductively over the reef as my blossoming belly took over, tiredness fading away.

My youngest, Matthew Renee is an observing soul who, though fully aware of his rights and willing to defend them at every turn, assumes a relaxed and peaceful personality. His womb-time was accompanied by popular love songs and, to my complete surprise, country & western music! Each night from my bay window I would look out at the Pacific Ocean and feel a depth of inner peace unbeknownst to me in pregnancies prior. Cher's beautiful song "After All" become a favorite, followed closely by "Wind Beneath My Wings." In the air was an element of romance, a developing love for myself, and the prompt deliverance of a peace promised in those moments after conception.

This three-fold experience with meeting my children more deeply through the art of dance and song paved the way for me to meet myself more deeply in the same way. Even now, in this postpartum world of mine, each night finds me slipping away from the family bed where my three angels sleep, donning a soft pink nightgown, easing state-of-the-art earphones over my thickly braided hair, and tuning in to the oldies but goodies that nurture my soul and make me grow.

Exercise serves many purposes in pregnancy, one of which is preparing our bodies for birth itself. However, those of us in the best of physical shape can still end up with compromising birth experiences.

The single most important area of personal responsibility during pregnancy lies in revealing to ourselves any and all belief systems about birth, and clearing away any emotional issues that may stand in the way of enjoying a perfect pregnancy and blissful birth. Understanding past birth experiences as

well as the cultural messages we have received up to this point makes it easier to correct areas which might otherwise impede our path as we approach the birth of our child.

Birth-clearing exercises are an excellent tool for transforming our psyche so that we become more in tune with our primality. One of my favorite exercises is called “The Great Debate.” In the book *I Could Do Anything* author Barbara Sher writes, “Whenever you leave your tribe (think differently than the social norm) or even consider leaving your tribe, you set off a debate in your mind between two skilled and ruthless teams of debaters, each of which claims to represent you. Make those debaters in your head go on record. Their arguments contain important information for you, and you need to get it onto paper where you can take a good look at it.

Divide a sheet of paper into two columns. In one column record assertions of the personal voice, so label this ‘Personal.’ The other column is for the voices of conformity, the tribal voice, and should be labeled ‘Tribal.’ As you

do this exercise and learn from it, your tribal voice will not suddenly disappear. It will keep disapproving, but from now on you will stop confusing it with your own intuition.”

Here’s the exercise I did when pregnant with Matthew:

I want to birth alone, in the privacy of my home:

Tribal: What if something goes wrong? You’ll hate yourself forever.

Personal: Learning to trust myself and believe in my heart-felt desires is so important to me that I am willing to take any risks necessary to complete my dream of primal mothering. I’ve denied myself a totally sovereign birth twice. I’m taking everything I learned into this present experience. I am ready and prepared for this.

Tribal: But what if the cord is wrapped around the baby's neck?

Personal: Then I'll unwrap it. I'm not will to dwell on what can go wrong when just as much energy can be used to instigate, and thus manifest, a positive outcome.

Tribal: You should have somebody there. It's irresponsible to jeopardize the life of you or your baby. And who's going to cut the cord?

Personal: Cutting an umbilical cord is not an academic endeavor. My responsibility is to listen to myself and vote on faith, not make decisions out of fear. Your fear-based perception is not my reality. Keep it to yourself, thank you.

If we can anticipate problems, then we can prevent them. And our biggest problem, notoriously, is our own mentality. I highly recommend Jane

Roberts' book, *The Nature of Personal Reality* for the purpose of separating yourself from any debilitating beliefs that could potentially pull you down at a time when you are designed to be experiencing life's all-time high:

Pregnancy and Birth.

The clearing of our physical environment is a confirmation of our personal inner growth. By my third pregnancy I was becoming an expert hound at smelling out all the stress factors in daily life, and reducing tension where I could. Traffic jams and child-detested car seats led me to the decision to sell my car. I started a savings account with the money and moved to a house within walking distance to everything I needed. I reduced the stress of driving and instigated an excellent exercise program. With Jasmine in the backpack and my expanding belly of Matthew Renee, Sarah Lee roller-skated in front of me as I pulled the shopping cart into town for our daily supply of fruit from the market and books from the library, smelling roses along the way instead of fighting off exhaust fumes in traffic.

I revamped my priorities and prepared for the lifestyle that awaited me raising three children. Hurricane Iniki had taught me a valuable lesson about the truth of necessities. The massive storm had taken away electricity and telephone service for several months. By candle-light I changed diapers and came in touch with need versus convenience.

I used that previously attained knowledge to whittle my financial world down to need, as I felt driven by my intuition to develop a substantial savings account by the time of Matthew's birth. It seemed so odd to be a welfare mother living below the poverty level and yet devising a plan to save as much as \$1,000 in the months to come. I put a 100% commitment behind that goal.

An unexpected stress caught me quite by surprise when, in my sixth month of pregnancy I began feeling irritable towards nursing my toddler. My

nipples were becoming increasingly sensitive and I finally - though reluctantly - made the choice to stop nursing Jasmine who was then almost three, until after her brother's birth. Some mothers breeze all the way through their pregnancies with no nipple discomfort while others, like myself, develop intolerant levels of nipple sensitivity and prefer taking temporary weaning measures rather than nursing a resentment toward their offspring.

You can count on people - peers and professionals alike - telling you it's harmful to be nursing while pregnant, that your older child is taking away valuable nutrients from both you and your growing fetus. Just tell them it's your legitimate excuse for eating as much as you want! After all, an uptake in nutritional output justifies increased nutritional input. In other words, it all balances out.

Speaking of eating as much as you want...make sure those food choices are serving your highest nutritional needs as well as the developing needs

of your womb-baby. When I am pregnant I feel naturally inclined to increase the nuts, seeds, avocados, and leafy greens in my fruitarian diet.

Choices other than delectable fruits, vegetables, nuts, and seeds have the propensity to create unwanted weight. How many times have you heard an overweight woman admit she never lost those pounds after her first baby was born? I hear it all the time, and it's a misery that can be avoided. In my Cozy Cradle baby sling business where I determine what size sling is needed according to the body size of the mother, I listen to women express their frustration at having gained too much weight during their pregnancy. They also convey a sense of futility for having never been able to take the weight off in pregnancies prior.

I'll save discussions on natural nutrition for a later chapter because what I'm mostly concerned with here is the self-esteem that suffers as a result of unnecessary weight-gain during pregnancy. When that baby finally slithers

blissfully from your beautiful body, nothing is more satisfying than being excited at the prompt return of your pre-pregnant state. It's like lending something special to a close friend; it's a pleasure to have it returned to you in as good or better condition than when you first handed it over.

Having babies doesn't have to ruin our body. Creating another human being requires about twenty pounds to accommodate baby, placenta, amniotic fluid, and breast enlargement. Do yourself a favor. Include high self-esteem with your pregnancy and birthing plans. When you gently release your precious child somewhere between hanging laundry and preparing dinner, be able to soon thereafter reach into your closet and take out that favorite outfit you've had on hold since you were about five months pregnant. Practice the dietary principles necessary to feel great about yourself after the birth, when your newborn is nursing peacefully at your breast while you enjoy meals without feeling frustrated, defeated, or obese.

There are so many delightful fruits, vegetables, nuts, and seeds that don't add unnecessary weight. Though I sometimes succumbed to cooked-food cravings during my pregnancies, I basically focused on eating what my body needed most - fresh, raw, natural, unadulterated foods. I remember how happy I felt just ten hours after giving birth, walking my three children up to the health food store and feeling slim and trim in a silky skirt that had been patiently awaiting my pre-pregnant state. I rewarded myself with the purchase of several fresh organic figs that, at \$8.00 per pound, proved to also be a reward for having reached my financial goal of \$1,000 before the birth of Matthew!

Feeling pretty is important. Pregnancy leads us through constant physical expansion and, in a society where flat stomachs are worshipped the pregnant woman needs to generate her own sense of beauty. Most maternity clothes are designed to cover up our big-ness. In pregnancy, I choose to counteract this closet mentality by gently wrapping my blossoming

womanhood with beautiful pareos...a Polynesian skirt/dress that ties at the waist or around the neck. From conception to birth and beyond, my loyal pareo meets my wardrobe needs. Skirts, such as a pareo, are especially comfortable because I don't experience the confinement that accompanies maternity pants. And, in those last months of pregnancy when I spend so much time going to the bathroom to relieve my cramped bladder, it's much easier to lift a loose skirt than to peel slacks over my huge baby-belly.

It's so much fun to buy baby clothes and get ready for our blossoming bundle of joy. My infant clothing package includes several flannel receiving blankets, three to four dozen cloth diapers, plenty of diaper covers and diaper pins, two or more Cozy Cradle baby slings, and several nightgowns that snap all the way down. I absolutely hate trying to dress a newborn in anything that has to go over their head. I figure they already paid their dues by pressing through such a narrow channel between the womb and the world. The least I can do is make dressing-time more comfortable.

For the most part, my newborns enjoy the freedom of nudity. Occasional cool weather and the pleasure of dry bedding at night are my motivators for having the right infant wardrobe on hand.

For those who choose to use diapers, cloth is best for a variety of reasons, the first being that cotton feels better against the skin than plastic. What would you think about trading in your designer cotton-wear and spending the next two years of your life encased in bulky plastic panties?

The next reason has to do with health. Babies who wear disposable plastic diapers are notorious for experiencing diaper rash, and few things are more painful for a baby than a sore and stinging bottom. There are many chemicals in plastic diapers that, when combined with the acidity of our baby's urine create a fertile environment for bacteria. The next reason has to do with finances. When you buy three dozen cloth diapers and some diaper covers your initial financial outlay becomes the end of consumerism

on this subject.

For their entire infancy and beyond, your baby's diapering needs are met; as will be the needs of their potential younger sibling who has yet to be conceived or considered. On the contrary, with disposable plastic diapers you are making regular trips to the store, laying down money that could be better spent on anything but some product that is compromising in comfort, unhealthy to our babies, and a menace to the planet.

And then there's the more primal approach that, for the most part, eliminates the need for diapers. It's called elimination timing. Have you ever wondered how women throughout the ages dealt with motherhood minus diapers? Mothers can actually learn to respond to the cues of their young. Babies produce a little sound and/or body signal right before they eliminate. By holding our infants over a receptacle, they can actually develop an understanding of communicating their elimination needs to us.

We simply hold our babies, resting their head against our chest and their back against our stomach while holding their little legs under their thighs to make a squat posture. Also, by using a sound like "psss" or "sshh" when we hold our babies out, an effective pattern of communication gets established. At night, rather than putting diapers on our babies, we can have a plastic pad covered with thick cotton underneath them in the event we don't wake up to hear their subtle evening cues. Otherwise, we can keep a receptacle by the bed and simply place them in the squat position, then return to a warm and dry embrace in the family bed.

Most mothers feel perplexed about building a baby's wardrobe prior to birth because they don't know whether their baby is a girl or a boy. Baby girls are given the joy of a rainbow while boys are relegated to blue. Pretty dresses bypass the infant male experience altogether. This is just another example of how women allow society to dictate their decisions without even

questioning. Homophobia is often at the root of this infant clothing paranoia, yet the fearing public doesn't take into consideration the fact that our male homosexual population was once a generation of baby boys who were assigned blue, and denied the pleasures of prettiness. A primal mother doesn't make her decisions based on the fear-based opinions of society.

My three-year-old son Matthew has a wardrobe that consists of shorts, shirts, skirts, and dresses...loose-fitting soft cotton and flannel dresses. He loves spinning around and feeling the fabric sway against his legs. Just the other day a man originally from the Orient asked me why I let my son wear dresses. I explained to him that I don't believe in sex discrimination of any sort, including the choice of clothing, and further reminded him that most cultures, even America right up to the time of the founding fathers, have readily accepted the idea of men in clothing that is free about the legs. He quickly admitted to me that, had his mother let him wear dresses and skirts when he was a little boy he, too, would be wearing one right now. His

testimony was accompanied by a certain sadness and sense of loss. Little boys who are denied personal expression, whether it's about clothes in general or colors in particular, are missing out on the joys of a versatile wardrobe and a wide range of emotional feelings.

Since our feet are servant to both traveler and passenger, they deserve the best we can offer them during this journey known as pregnancy. I've always adhered to the barefoot approach to motherhood, but for those who prefer a bit of distance between the soles of their feet and the soil of the earth, I highly recommend shoes that cater to the natural form of your foot. Obviously raised heels don't fit into the scheme of natural footwear.

Through all three of my pregnancies, I have not developed stretch marks which I believe is due to the fact that I rubbed my belly, thighs, and bottom with olive oil each day. This daily discipline felt wonderful as I took time out to nurture myself and massage my in-resident child.

Common sense suggests that man-made drugs have no place in pregnancy.

However, if we are actively involved in the overconsumption of nicotine or other man-made drugs, the insidious nature of drug dependency can blur our decision-making. Thus, it is helpful to participate in a support group for the sake of abstaining from that which will harm both ourselves and our babies.

I have always relied on twelve-step programs like Alcoholics Anonymous to master any particular habit that doesn't belong in my life in general and my pregnancy in particular.

During a rebirthing session (a technique developed by Leonard Orr whereby you lie down, breathe in deeply and rapidly for an hour or longer to release stress and trauma held in the tissues of the body), I recalled/relived my feelings about life inside my mother's womb. My memories were primarily centered around the anxiety I felt as a result of the constant flood of nicotine and caffeine that was coming through my mother's body. Just keep

in mind, we share virtually everything with our baby; our food, our cigarettes, our coffee, even our emotions.

Speaking of emotions, given the fact it takes two to tango, pregnancy inevitably brings with it the need to deal with, heal from, let go of, or further commit to a relationship with our unborn baby's father. If you are in a healthy relationship and both of you look forward to the shared commitment of parenting, that's great. Keep doing what works, and keep enjoying the fruits of your efforts. But not all of us experience companionship after conception. People break up. Abandonment by a partner upon learning of a pregnancy is common, and men abusing women during pregnancy is devastatingly real.

My partner at the time of Sarah Lee's conception was a practicing alcoholic who was both verbally and physically abusive. My mothering instincts quickly taught me that pregnancy is a time of not putting up with any shit!

By my sixth month of pregnancy, the she-bear within had grown to the point that I counter-attacked his abuse with a blow so substantial he never once laid a hand on me again. Though the physical violence had stopped, the alcoholic thinking and verbal digs continued to the point that I gained enough self-esteem to demand a better world for myself and my child.

No matter how you slice it, the bottom line is that WE are the ones who are pregnant. WE are ultimately responsible for the act of baby-building, and WE are fast approaching the all-consuming role of mother. Pregnancy is a one-woman show, often-times accompanied by caring partners, but just as often staged without a crew. Nature has designed us to be autonomous in matters concerning pregnancy, birth, and raising humanity. We have what it takes to satisfy the requirements of raising our young, with or without a partner.

Those seemingly unplanned pregnancies can be the toughest, when we

subconsciously rely on this turn of events to overcome any problems existing inside an intimate relationship. I call this "romancing the zygote." Under these circumstances we need to really face ourselves and be sure the continuation of our pregnancy is not fueled chiefly by the assumption that "he'll change his mind and want to marry me" or "he'll quit drinking and become a responsible father," or whatever it is that we wish would change as a result of having "his" baby. The fate of my last pregnancy was a hard one to decide upon because my relationship had sadly ended a month before I knew I was pregnant. I was scared at the prospect of being a mother to three children, yet at the same time I serenely accepted the challenge that lay before me until the day I learned Matthew's father and his extended family wanted nothing to do with this coming child. My emotional entanglement with Matthew's father left me torn between continuing with the pregnancy and having the abortion I assumed would please this man. It took a great deal of soul-searching to break free from this codependency, to decide for myself

what was to be.

This dilemma goes both ways. If we need to postpone the call of motherhood and the father disagrees, so be it. Nothing is more important to our mental health than to be honest with ourselves and take action necessary to nurture that honesty. The argument is not about being pro-life or pro-choice; it's about being pro-woman that she may have control over her life. I've been on both sides of this fence, and each time I needed to muster up the self-love necessary to make such a heartfelt decision. Believe me, if men became pregnant abortion would be a sacrament.

For the sake of your own serenity, your child's self-esteem, and the birth experience itself, I encourage you to work through any resentments and expectations you may have regarding your relationship to the biological father of your child. Codependency recovery is a valuable tool for dealing with this issue. It's also very important to look at inner-child healing as an

avenue for working through relationship issues, since our intimate relationships tend to mirror the core relationships we had while growing up.

It's all inter-related. I have come to recognize the correlation between my attraction to emotionally unavailable men and having been raised by a father who simply could not express any emotion except rage. Thus, my adulthood has been plagued by relationships wherein I feel unloved and afraid. It is for this very reason that my children are from three different fathers. It took years of self-discovery work to find the core of my attractions so I could finally change my life-script. Motherhood called long before my ability to manifest and maintain a healthy intimate relationship to a sexual mate. Today, I enjoy the nurturing qualities of healthy male friendships, because I dove deep to find the roots of my fatal attractions, then nurtured my way home to being treated with respect.

Society treats pregnancy as a disease while accepting the status quo of

unsatisfactory relationships. What if, instead of going to doctors to treat our pregnancies, we went to support groups and therapists specializing in women's issues to treat our feelings and heal our relationships during the course of a perfectly primal, self-governing, truly pleasant pregnancy?

Another homework assignment designed to be completed in the course of our pregnancies is addressing the subject of birth itself. Society has molded a belief system about birth to be one of fear, pain, complications, and necessary medical direction. So many women are told their baby is too big, their pelvic region is too small, or any other number of diagnoses that lead medical experts to automatically and authoritatively plug into "barbaric" birthing practices. Let us not forget obstetrics is the second highest paid profession, just behind surgeons, which could explain why obstetricians are steadily increasing their practice of performing c-sections.

Let us also not forget the miraculous wonders of a naturally expanding

pelvis during birth, when we are relaxed and in harmony with our body and our baby, when the physical environment and people therein are comforting rather than condescending. Since the reality of our birth experience is merely a reflection of earlier actions (or inactions) taken, we need to delve deep so as to create the birth of our desires.

Emotional clearing during these months of blossoming motherhood takes us on a myriad of disclosures, as we call a spade a spade and awaken to our sovereignty. It's a time when we need to look within for our answers and overcome the urge to hand our power over to others. I went so far as to have my telephone service disconnected in my last pregnancy because well-meaning friends were aghast at my self-governing approach to pregnancy and birth, and my confidence was wavering in light of this barrage of disapproval. Too many times I had reached out through "Ma Bell" for my answers instead of getting quiet enough to hear my intuition speak, soft and true. I pitted my sovereignty against social chatter and developed the

courage to argue for my convictions.

In many ways, pregnancy was a lonely time. I ached for the circle of loving support that humanity once knew. I longed for the sisterhood of women who in times past were deeply rooted in their power, for the brotherhood who expressed awe and respect for the natural abilities of their sisters. I humbly accepted the reality that my Purpose in this life was to carry the message of primal mothering. It was my task, sometimes a lonely journey often accompanied by persecution, to reconnect women to their Primal Power and to restore humanity to that loving support. Somehow, knowing the magnitude of my mission, the lonesome feelings slipped away to be replaced by awesome gratitude. Like Jonathan Livingston Seagull who flew away beyond the far cliffs of social consciousness, my sadness was not so much about solitude as it was that others refused to recognize the joyful healing found in primal mothering. And anyway, I wasn't really alone; I had the sacred

company of my womb-baby.

I learned to speak to my baby. Prenatal psychology being the latest breakthrough in the field of human development, I was enjoying regular and consistent communication with my unborn as proof of what research now suggests. Before going to sleep at night, I talked to my babies. I asked questions about their in-utero needs; was I eating sufficiently for their optimum growth? What did they prefer in the way of my exercise program? What were their hopes and fears about the upcoming birth? I also shared with them all my fears and joys, expectations, and such. I often awoke in the morning to their messages sweetly implanted on my psyche. I relied on this avenue of communications for questions as important as whether they were in a good position to be born and what position I should assume at the exact time of birth. In one dream, in-utero Matthew showed me he would be turning head-down during labor, so for me not to worry about whether his head was

engaged prior to that, and in another dream I was on all fours in my living room at the time of his birth, with little Sarah Lee supporting his head as he descended from my body.

By the way, just because "head-down" is the most popular position at the time of birth does not mean any variations from this theme are wrong. The birthing knowledge contained between a woman and her child is sufficient to bring about the end result.

I think the most burning question in my mind with each of my pregnancies was, what position will I end up giving birth in? I wanted to be physically fit for all possible options. Gardening proved to be an excellent all-around preparation for birth. The squatting position was especially helpful for opening my pelvic region. I watch little children as they naturally assume the primal position of squatting, and find my intuition reminding me of the fact that squatting during childbirth is the most natural and common position

for primal mothers.

With all this preparation work - clearing the past and planning for the future - living in the present can seem to elude us. That's where practices like meditation and yoga come into play. It's also a good idea to bathe ourselves in spiritually nourishing literature and tapes that keep us aware of our moment-by-moment world. One book that has really helped me is *The Precious Present*, by Spencer Johnson. It's a beautifully simple story that takes less than an hour to read. I made a point of reading it every day of my pregnancies.

Preparation for birth begins with conception because there is so much we need to unlearn. Unlike what we have been taught, birth is not just about proper breathing techniques or when to push. In fact, as you will learn in the next chapter, we needn't "breathe" correctly nor "push" our babies out. We do, however, need to know ourselves well enough to allow our instincts

the opportunity to orchestrate birth as it is intended by Nature.

Every woman deserves the sense of accomplishment derived from shedding authority and embracing her own sovereignty. By withdrawing our energies from the medical establishment and building a strong foundation in Self, we in effect become students of our higher knowing and surrender to the Truth of Creation.

If the upcoming birth experience is not our first, then we can look at our previous birth(s) and awaken to the dynamics that were involved. What didn't we like? What appeared to go wrong? Where did we go against our intuition? What could we have done differently?

Rewrite those births to reflect the way we really wanted them to go. Then create affirmations to support that vision and tape them up everywhere!

Make book-marks depicting their messages. Some of my birth affirmations

included:

I enjoy a sense of grace during birth

I show absolutely no signs of fear or concern

My only responsibility is to control my mind; my body will birth my baby
safely and efficiently

Just courage and patience are required to send my baby merrily into my
loving arms

I see birth as a personal challenge, and I am confident I am up to the task

I give birth in safety and solitude

As long as I am alone and able to yield to the sexual joy of the birthing, I
am able to experience wonderful orgasmic feelings and no pain at all

I believe my baby's birth will come quickly, quietly, and easily

I keep my legs, arms, face and pelvic floor completely relaxed

I believe steadfastly in what I see in the hours of vision and clear sky

Chapter Three

BIRTH...Blissful Beginnings

"Like their animal sisters, women will someday
deliver their own babies peacefully and painlessly
at home. Women will understand that birth is only
dangerous and painful for those who believe it is."

Laura Kaplan Shanley, Unassisted Childbirth

With my first pregnancy, I was told my idea of a homebirth was both insidious and illegal, thus I dutifully registered with the prenatal clinic at the local hospital. Nobody mentioned the fact that hospital births have six times the mortality rate of home births.

Despite my obedience to this illegality rumor that I had no right to take my pregnancy and my child's birth into my own hands, a part of me clung tenaciously to the idea of birthing alone. Though I was exposed to the medical establishment on a regular basis, like a deviant school-girl I had every intention of playing hooky on the eve of my daughter's birth.

In my last month of pregnancy I dreamed I would go into labor while dancing at the University pow wow, that my baby would be born into my arms with no intervention from anyone. I'll always remember my mounting

excitement as the date of that pow wow drew near. As I headed out the door, putting the finishing touches on my dancing outfit, I packed a diaper bag for the first time in my life and felt like Cinderella of Motherhood.

I entered the large, crowded auditorium just in time to catch the first drumming of the night. I quickly pulled my dancing shawl across my shoulders and headed happily to the dance floor. Just as I began my first turn, fringe from my shawl beginning its awesome flight, two hands gripped my arms and corresponding faces (my then-husband and a close friend) shamed me for such selfishness, insisting I was crazy to be so physically active late in my pregnancy.

Being stopped from participating in the unfolding of my dream was not nearly as shocking as the obedience I observed in me. Like a reprimanded child, I sat down and cried. Minutes later, a swelling sensation brought all my attention to the daughter within, and I realized labor had indeed begun.

By this time I had given over all of my power and heard myself mumbling to someone that I was having contractions. The next thing I knew, we were walking three miles in the snow, heading to the hospital where, upon arrival, my labor fizzled out and I was sent home. That night I lay crying in bed, holding my aching heart instead of my precious baby.

A week later I awoke at midnight to the sensation of warm water running between my legs. I calmly mentioned the wet bedding to my then-husband, and he frantically went running for the campus police. There I was, sitting in the back-seat of a police car that was heading to the last place I wanted to be.

Upon arrival at the much dreaded hospital site, I was coldly ordered into a wheelchair and taken up to the labor room. There, the nurses busted my water bag the rest of the way, probing around, then told me I was two

centimeters and that it would be a while.

I got dressed and sought out the solitude I so desperately needed. For the next seven hours, while my then-husband slept on the waiting room couch, I stayed to myself - walking through the quiet three-story building, finding refuge in the emergency staircases, squatting deeply with each contraction and talking joyously to my womb-daughter the entire time.

At 7:00/am, I heard my name over the hospital intercom system, ordering me back to the labor room. Against my intuition I headed back to what became the epitome of my gullibility, as I proceeded to condone the initial command of intervention that led to a host of complications, resulting in a c-section.

Upon hearing my name over the intercom my first instinct had been to quietly exit the nearest door and walk home in the winter's chill where I

could birth my baby in the privacy of my cozy travel-home. After all, no one would ever guess this pregnant and laboring woman was trekking three miles in the snow to enjoy primal birthing in simple surroundings.

But I did not heed my inner call and I have a c-section scar to prove it.

I'm not the only one wearing this badge of dis-courage, verification of a botched birth. This form of medical intrusion (the end result of all interventions prior) leads the way as the single most common major surgery in the United States. Between physicians and the pharmaceutical industry, childbirth is a fifteen billion dollar annual pelvic gold-mine.

Joseph Chilton Pearce, through his writings, has shown that at the first sign of an interference or intervention of something that's liable to threaten a birthing mother, the mammalian limbic structures of the brain function to stop the birth process. The mother waits until the coast is clear or moves to another place to give birth where it is safer. That's our mammalian

genetically-encoded heritage. When we succumb to hospital surroundings and the medical mentality we literally position ourselves to shut down progressive labor, which puts medical personnel on the aggressive and our true needs, as well as the needs of our unborn child, in jeopardy. I was experiencing regular and consistent contractions during my three-mile trek to the hospital the night of the pow wow, but the moment I walked through the metal doors of the emergency room my brain applied the brakes to the hormonal activity of my womb. And then, a week later, I experienced the same intelligent intervention by my brain when I was called back to the labor room after having spent seven glorious hours by myself. In both instances, I was, as Joseph Chilton Pearce describes, efforting to move to another place to give birth where it felt safer. Despite all my efforts, I was still in the psychic clutches of the medical mentality. Since hospital personnel are not trained to stay out of the way of Nature's plan, my desired birth - as well as the birthright of my daughter - was snatched away.

My long-yearned-for sovereign birth was wiped out in the flash of a surgeon's knife, preceded by the intruding foreplay of monitors, IV'S, pitocin, and the paranoid hands of total strangers. Right up until the final hour, when I was informed a c-section was the next step in this medical nightmare, I managed to maintain conscious contact with my daughter through each contraction.

I found labor itself to be a delightful challenge, despite the inhospitable environment of white-coated robots and the crass smell of sterility. Months prior, I had dreamed that a female deer would encourage me throughout the birth experience. Sure enough, with the first signs of labor came the vision of a beautiful doe standing in a snow-covered meadow. Her eyes were liquid pools of brown warmth and tranquility as she invited me to seek comfort with each contraction by looking deeply into the windows of her soul. At one point during my labor, when a nurse decided to speed up the

pitocin drip that caused my contractions to come nearly one atop the other - making it difficult to maintain my mental composure - the powerful doe reminded me to stay connected by gazing even more deeply into her eyes.

When, due to the physical discomfort of medically-forced contractions I moved farther away from my center, this spotted doe mentor emphatically insisted I

look down at her feet. I did. And to my complete amazement, out from the snow-laden soil shot a breathtaking purple flower! I was so shocked by its sudden presence amidst the vision of winter I actually transcended the physical pain caused by medical technology.

Nonetheless, all of my mental work could not overturn the ugly consequences of medical intervention. I was in their clutches and my gullibility had placed me there, along with the codependent behavior of acquiescing to an unsupportive spouse whose fear-based mentality kept him from understanding my deep desire for a home birth. If only I had

managed to defy his fears. If only I had educated myself about the procedural interventions practiced by hospital staff. My gullibility had led to giving my power away. I had "trusted" that the consciousness of the medical team was on my side and sensitive to my primal mothering needs. Instead, I learned the hard way that medical mentality and hospital procedures do not reflect the true needs of a birth in process. By allowing my then-husband to lead the way, and then stepping foot in that hospital, I assumed the patient/victim role, thereby sharing in the drama of a compromising birth where a total stranger in a white mask announced to me I had a baby girl, the same baby girl whose entrance into this world was both emotionally and physically painful, with an excruciatingly long seven-hour wait before being united with her belly-slashed mother.

Why is it assumed that babies don't feel pain? The bright lights of a delivery room; total strangers grasping, pulling, scrubbing, probing, cutting,

stabbing; unfamiliar voices devoid of emotion. As one psychologist reveals, "Pain makes a deep impression; babies are probably more impressionable than older children and adults. Protecting them from the impact of pain would prevent personal suffering at the beginning of life and the need for psychotherapeutic repairs later."

Part of the reason why I didn't have coverage on the birthing front of this battle to reveal my primal motherhood self was that all of my positive thinking and visualization efforts during pregnancy were geared toward manifesting a successful breastfeeding experience upon the birth of my daughter. Both my adolescent and adult life had been riddled with shame over the smallness of my chest, a message that carried with it a feeling of inevitable inadequacy regarding my mammalian self. This fear of malfunction due to size was exacerbated by the many horror stories from other mothers about failed nursing attempts, cracked and bleeding nipples, and other unimaginable experiences in breastfeeding.

In an effort to protect myself from the flames of futility, I joined La Leche League, an international organization with groups all over the world designed to support breastfeeding women. I performed daily visualizations. And I taped a beautiful picture of a mother nursing her baby onto my mirror where I glanced at it frequently each and every day. I was diligent and militant about coming to believe in my ability to nurse.

In retrospect, I can see I completely avoided educating myself about or mentally preparing myself for the dynamics of birth. At the time I did not comprehend the fact that one cannot serve two masters. Though my faith-filled heart was in favor of a self-governing pregnancy and sovereign birth, my fearful head led me in a different direction. I went to my prenatal appointments punctually and had even once inquired about the birthing chair at the hospital. I skipped the labor room/delivery room tour as my way to prove earnestness to plans of birthing at home but still, the majority of my

actions were voting against my heart's desire. Along the lines of Albert Einstein's advice that we cannot simultaneously prevent and prepare for war, I could not simultaneously prevent and prepare for a hospital birth.

For the record, all my positive thinking and accompanying mental work for a successful breastfeeding experience brought to fruition my desired result. To this day, more than twelve years later, I am still watching my children grow from the milk my "small" breasts produce. Then again, I practiced no compromising behavior on this particular subject of primal mothering. I went to my La Leche League breastfeeding support meetings faithfully and made friends with breastfeeding women. I never once succumbed to the advice of many who recommended I should have baby bottles and formula on hand, just in case my milk was nonexistent or insufficient. I burned all bridges and determined I would nurse my baby once she was born. Unfortunately, I had not pulled out all the stoppers for having her precious birth be as primal as her first feeding experience.

Like any recipe, it takes the inclusion and harmony of all ingredients to enact the finished product. My failed attempt at a primal birth was a perfect example of overlooking some of the necessary ingredients. Still, my first pregnancy did introduce me to the art of values clarification, putting first things first, and developing the daily discipline necessary to stay focused on important goals. These new virtues were carried into my second pregnancy where I learned more, and got better results.

I had never even heard of c-sections prior to the birth of my first child. Funny how I could have ignored what is a growing epidemic in today's society. I must have really been in denial on the subject of birth. Why did I unconsciously need to eliminate birth education from my pregnancy experience? This question stuck to me like glue. Six years later, when I learned I was pregnant again, the answer became crystal clear. My subconscious definition of birth was: big-time pain. I was afraid I had not

the ability to endure the physical horror of a vaginal birth.

For six years I had worn the cloak of victim regarding my c-section, and the belief that the hospital staff simply did what needed to be done; it was inevitable; after all, I was inadequate in the way of birthing. I had bought the story-line that I was incapable of natural childbirth. But underneath this rationalization lived the forlorn female whose desire and need for a primal, sovereign birth still clung hopefully to her soul. Somewhere deep inside me I knew my hospital experience did not reflect my true abilities.

The moment I learned of this second pregnancy my heart immediately won over my head. I resolved to reach deep within and go to any lengths to create the birth I so desperately needed and wanted. I was hungry for the totality of my womanhood, and this time I would do my homework.

The first thing I did was contact an organization that supports women who

are determined to experience a vaginal birth after a c-section (VBAC). In part because so many wanna-be surgeons (otherwise known as obstetricians) deem it only "natural" for c-section patients to experience more of the same, it is normal and prevalent for recipients of birth-surgery to experience the same in births to follow. I refused to pad the statistics.

My hospital experience had left such a sour taste in my mouth that I swung clear from seeking any medical assistance to securing a deep sense of sovereignty from start to finish.

The idea of a midwife didn't even register as a logical next step once I exorcised medical intervention from my psyche. I had seen how women gave themselves over to controlling midwives just as easily and obediently as when I had given my power away to hospital staff.

It was clear to me that my first major step toward a successful sovereign

birth was to take responsibility for what had happened during the birth of little Sarah Lee. A victim mentality was not going to reap the rewards I desired. I had to disprove the notion that my c-section was necessary, and then ask myself why I gave my power away in the first place.

I remember the day my hospital chart came in the mail. A nurse-friend of mine interpreted the medical jargon for me and quickly analyzed that my c-section had been typical of those she sadly observed day in and day out on her job. Impatient medical staff trying to speed up the process of labor, creating compounding complications with each intervention which leads to further interventions resulting in major surgery. In other words, I had been medically raped.

At hearing the truth of my medical experience, my first reaction was not one of relief as I thought it would be. Instead, I cried deeply. The emotional pain was overwhelming. Somehow it had been easier, more comfortable, to

believe I had succumbed to the inevitable and oh, what a good thing because the nice doctor had saved my baby! Now I was left with the raw realization that my much-desired primal birth, the prized treasure of my womanhood, had been at my fingertips and I let it slip away.

Why did I let it slip away? What beliefs had I clung to so tenaciously and unconsciously that their grip undermined the intensity of my desires? What fears about birth had I managed to sweep under the carpet? I certainly had my work cut out for me.

I began by taking full responsibility for my pregnancy; no prenatal exams, no back-up plans, no midwife contacts. I read books and articles written by women who experienced vaginal births after c-sections. I changed my reality around enough to be in alignment with my goal. Having learned the lesson that one cannot serve two masters, I put all my eggs in one basket and developed the courage necessary to envision this c-section-scarred body

of mine bringing forth a healthy baby with no complications and no interventions.

I familiarized myself with the anatomy of birth and became increasingly interested in water birthing because, according to the testimonies I had read, pain in childbirth is decreased when laboring in water. Upon reading the book *Ocean Birth*, I chose this pregnancy as my motivation for getting to Hawaii.

I was finding out all about the responsibility that accompanies commitment and, as the time drew nearer, more obstacles seemed to cross my path helping me to release any hidden fears and other mental land-mines which needed unearthing before my due date. My biggest fear, probably the leading culprit that sent me reeling into denial with my first pregnancy, was my fear of pain. Just the idea of a baby passing through my cervix and beyond was enough to make me shudder. However, after reading *Painless*

Childbirth by Fernand Lamaze and checking in more closely with my intuitive wisdom, I came to the joyous conclusion that pain was not a necessary component of childbirth.

I read everything I could get my hands on about pain; why it happens, how it happens, how to avoid it. I learned the importance of mind over matter.

I knew from personal experience that pain could be eliminated simply by changing my mental focus, so I started a daily regime of birth visualizations where pain was non-existent. I also practiced some re-birthing techniques that got me in touch with the fact that my own mother had experienced excruciating pain during my forceps delivery. Her screams had become my reality about what to expect in childbirth.

With only two weeks to go in my pregnancy I was beginning to fret about the position of my daughter, as everyone was asking me the same question..."How do you know if your baby is in the right position to be

born?" I began to have fear and called a midwife for the specific purpose of determining Jasmine's position. Instead of simply saying "Yes, she's head down," I endured a session of reprimand for having neglected to receive prenatal care, was told I was considered high risk because I had a previous c-section, I was nearly forty years old, and I was a red-head. She concluded her lecture with an offer to give me a discount by charging only one thousand dollars for the delivery service that she insisted I need.

As coincidence would have it, just as I was falling into the abyss of figuring how to come up with money to pay someone who had convinced me of my irresponsibility to birth alone, a very close friend happened to be driving by. He saw my car, slowed up, saw my face drained of its usual glow, and asked what was wrong. When I told him what was going on he replied, "So, you're going to bet one thousand dollars that your dream birth is not possible?" That gentle slap of reality spun my fully blossomed belly away from the midwife and toward the car that took me back to my special spot

on the beach where a very special sovereign birth awaited.

A few nights later, an even stranger coincidence took place. While visiting with the same friend who had helped me flee from the fear-based clutches of that pushy midwife just days prior I had a dream in which Jasmine told me she preferred to be born up on the mountain of Kokee - which is where I happened to be at the time of this dream. She made it clear that negative consequences would surely result if I gave birth at the beach; strangers would interfere, and a whole new birthing nightmare would take place.

The next morning, while trying to digest this nocturnal demand from my womb-baby, the friend whose cabin I was visiting awoke to tell me Jasmine had come to him in a dream, showing her umbilical cord was adequate in length and when her head came out the first thing she would do is smile at him. She showed the birth taking place in a small cottage on the mountain

of Kokee!

A few hours later I called a friend of mine in Oklahoma who, upon hearing my voice, immediately began telling me about this dream she had the night before...you guessed it. Jasmine was proudly telling her she was to be born in a cabin on a mountain in Hawaii.

Needless to say, I was in a state of confusion as I headed into the final days before labor began. With this new information I broke camp, left the beautiful sandy beach and guided my little family up the long and winding climb to Kokee Mountain. Three nights later I went into labor at my friend's cabin. I awoke to the feel of breaking waters, then quietly slipped from the bed and made myself comfortable in the kitchen. Wrapped in a green chenille bathrobe, I put on my earphones and began dancing while looking out a most magnificent moon.

Things were fine until my friend woke up. When I disconnected from the dancing and told of my present laboring condition, fears of what I considered "inevitable pain to follow" began to surface and I worried about the fact that the ocean was beyond reach and my friend did not have a bath tub. Because I had not completely abandoned my idea of a waterbirth - because I still clung desperately to my fear of pain and used the waterbirth concept as insurance against it - my friend drove us to a neighboring cottage where awaited a deep bear-claw bath tub for my laboring and birthing needs.

Once settling into this new environment, I put my tape player and earphones to work again and disconnected from all that was going on around me.

Contractions were five minutes apart as I resumed my birthing dance - a most beautiful sensual snake-like movement that I had been enjoying throughout my pregnancy. The physical environment of this neighbor woman's home was cozy, with a fire in the fireplace, candles and such, the

smell of herb teas brewing...but something was wrong. There was an undercurrent of tension I intuitively felt was affecting the process of my labor. I felt like I was on stage as a flurry of activity surrounded me, people I didn't know coming and going, the telephone ringing, the television blaring, even a man attempting to get my attention in an effort to strike up a deal to buy my car! Next thing I knew, my contractions were weaker and farther apart.

Finally the neighbor woman suggested something must be wrong since so many hours had passed with no apparent progress. In my vulnerable state of mind that's all it took to start feeling my power slip away. Aside from the external distractions, up to this point I was indeed creating the experience I desired; no pain and lots of inner calm. In no time at all I managed to turn my will over to believing someone else must know more than I did.

This neighbor woman insisted my notion of a painless birth was unrealistic, birth was designed to be painful and I must accept that fact. In her words, 'Giving birth is like shitting a watermelon.' My fears were being fanned, and it wasn't too many contractions later that I began experiencing pain for the first time in over sixteen hours of joyous dancing and singing during labor.

I lost control. I couldn't regain my center. I found myself relying on others totally to keep me from falling into an abyss of physical horror. I had no idea who I was, where I was, nothing. I was being told to push, but I didn't believe in pushing. Out the window went my intuition, followed closely by my convictions. I lost connection to my own script. It seemed I could only do what I was told. I was in the midst of upholding the drama expected by society's consciousness - the sweating at the brow, all eyes on my perineum, coaching from the front and sidelines, hot packs between contractions. I knew instinctively that pushing was making things worse, but

I had the bigger concern of being compliant amidst the coercion. The positions I was being told to assume were equally unnatural to my primal self. At one point I was accused of being stubborn about how things should go and, anyway, why couldn't I lie on my back and give birth like any other woman? Through all the submission on my part, I did manage to refuse to lie down.

In true form to things being "darkest" before the dawn, when I could endure the situation no longer, my friend who had saved me from the midwife's control just days prior took action. Up until this point he had been quietly yet uncomfortably staying in the background. All of a sudden he got right in my face and screamed above the chanting commands of his neighbor, "Hygeia, this is YOUR birth! YOU wanted it! Now, YOU take it!" His eyes burned conviction into mine and in the next moment I felt Jasmine swoop past my cervix and in five involuntary pushes she peeked her head

of red hair out to smile at my friend - just as his dream had shown - then slid into home-base, safe, and soundless.

Unfortunately all the tension, awkward positions and forced pushing left me torn and tattered. Jasmine's exit through my vagina was my entrance to excruciating pain. Heavy laden with hemorrhoids, and stinging with every trip to the bathroom, the next few weeks were miserable. Yes, I had accomplished my vaginal birth after a c-section, but I had not achieved my ideal birth. Something was still missing.

With my first birth the uneasiness was vague because I claimed ignorance, plus I had been medicated prior to the surgery. At that time I had not educated myself about birth and I knew next to nothing about personal empowerment. Now, with this second birth, I was faced with the glaring facts: I had given away my power which resulted in a compromising birth experience. I experienced pain that I THOUGHT I didn't believe in. I

pushed despite my intuition, and now it hurt to pee.

Once again, my ensuing reality was different from my original intent. There was obviously more to learn. This feeling of shame and disappointment clouded over me as I tried to pat myself on the back for a successful VBAC and a medically unassisted birth away from hospital personnel.

Two years later the question still burned in my mind. Would things have gone better if I had held onto my power? Could I have held onto my power under that peer-pressure circumstance?

Did I have to rip? Did it have to hurt? Unbeknownst to me, a third child was coming into my life and, as I watched the urine dipstick turn YES I thought to myself, maybe the third time is the charm.

Now came the task of giving myself full credit for having a VBAC under my

belt rather than being the recipient of not one, but two c-section scars. I no longer had to jump the hoop of believing in my ability to birth. I had indeed experienced a medically unassisted vaginal homebirth. Though I had lost control and known fear in the latter part of those twenty four hours of labor I had also succeeded in bringing forth my child. I had been courageous in the face of my fear.

After all, courage does not mean the elimination of fear. Courage means acting in spite of the fact that we are afraid. Even though there were no medications or monitors, no doctors or midwives, I still couldn't call my birthing experience "natural" because I saw nothing natural in the pain I felt, the pushing I performed, or the resulting physical assault on my perineum. My truly sovereign and primal birth was yet to be had.

With the sad taste of postpartum disappointment fresh in my mind I combed through every inch of that birth experience, resolving to overcome each

obstacle that before had stood in my way. As I began to take full responsibility for all that had happened I was able to get a better view of my unconscious fears.

A part of me was afraid to be responsible for the outcome. I wanted somebody to blame, because deep down I believed I was incapable of a pleasant birth. Up until this moment of reflection and review I had indeed blamed outside circumstances for my compromising home birth. If only that woman had not said it was supposed to hurt. If only she had not insisted I push. If only there weren't so many people coming and going. From this blaming viewpoint I had no leverage with which to change my circumstances. But, when I considered the possibility I had unconsciously created the situation in the first place, I was then empowered with the option to change the nature of my personal reality.

Layer number one...I had no choice but to face my codependency issues. I

was taking care of others during labor when I was supposed to be focusing on myself and my baby. During labor with my first pregnancy I had actually called from the hospital bed phone between contractions to order lunch for my husband who was sitting right there watching television! With my second laboring experience I was concerned over the fact I was taking up someone else's bed and causing inconvenience to others; a bed, by the way, I never would have been sitting on had I not listened to the bed-owner's motto that laboring women belonged there.

Like my grief over the unnecessary interventions with my first daughter's birth, I now faced the truth that I had, once again, foisted my efforts to have a sovereign and complication-free birth experience. I had rationalized I could not have done it without those people at that mountain cottage. It was just now occurring to me I may have needed them simply because they were there. When we are alone in a given endeavor and there's nobody to turn to, we are pressured to reach within for the strength and

stamina to carry us through. After all, that's why vision quests are a solitary dance. Who is to say I would have failed in solitude?

Less than two years later, with a third child growing peacefully inside my womb, this revelation from my second birth experience was accompanied by a burst of self-confidence that put me on course for that 100% commitment needed to finally know the primal birth defined by my heart and soul.

As coincidence would have it, the day I reached maximum throttle with this non-negotiable level of commitment I received in the mail a newsletter that supported unassisted homebirth. I immediately ordered the book *Unassisted Childbirth* by Laura Kaplan Shanley that was highly recommended by the editors of this particular newsletter.

Laura's book became my bible. I read it repeatedly, studied it, slept with it under my pillow, and devoured every resource book suggested by the

author. This woman knew what I wanted! What I needed! Nobody up to that point understood why I would want to give birth all by myself. Laura Kaplan Shanley had enjoyed her first two births in the presence of her partner, but realized that, for her, birth was a personal challenge she would rather reach - like a vision quest - alone. Someone was speaking my language. I finally felt safe inside myself because I was no longer alone.

Most of the medically unassisted homebirths I was reading about in other books were stories where women endured intense levels and long hours of pain, giving all credit for success to their partner, saying they couldn't have done it without his support. Each testimony I read brought back to mind that recent revelation...maybe I needed those people at that cottage simply because they were there. I know I can change a flat tire with more conviction and efficiency when there is not someone, especially a man, nearby. No, I wanted to birth alone and, like Laura Kaplan Shanley learned for herself, personal empowerment was the reward that awaited me.

I soon found out how few people agreed with or supported my birthing intentions. My friends took on the form of fear-based worry-warts and neighbors shunned me for bringing such craziness upon the community. I created a support team, a mastermind Group that consisted of Laura's wisdom inside her book, the powerful speaker Les Brown inside his cassette tape series Live Your Dreams!, and Susan Jeffers inside her book Feel the Fear and Do It Anyway! Though I couldn't realistically invite my trusted team over for tea on any given afternoon, the close psychic connection I maintained with these empowered role models kept me going as I blasted through all the obstacles necessary for creating a totally successful, totally sovereign, totally primal birth.

In the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous it says, "We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it." Relating this wisdom to my situation, I had to forgive myself and others for my previous birth experiences. I had

to heal from all the blame and any of the shame. I took responsibility for the fears and other beliefs that led me to making the decision that created my experiences. I asked my dreams to show me how those births would have gone if those fears didn't exist inside me. From this introspective homework assignment came a sense of peace. The past was now a rich treasure of self-understanding, no longer a slaughter-ground where my dream was twice crucified.

I looked beyond the birth of Matthew to the beautiful bonding between myself and my three precious children. I learned to be patient, embracing the idea that patience was a creative waiting, trusting that in time what I desired would come to pass.

Unearthing my hidden belief systems was not an overnight job. Gestation was happening on all levels, not just in-utero. I had several dreams about premature birth and I knew that these nocturnal premonitions were my cue

to accept patience as a nurturing and necessary virtue for the overall success of my desired sovereign birth. My impatience was mostly tied into my increasing intolerance of the chatter-box in my head telling me that I would fail and all would suffer as a result. I wanted to get past the finish line as soon as possible so I no longer had to live with the anxiety of apprehension.

Then came the hoop with the most flames lapping within. All of this inner work would be in vain were I not to activate the peristaltic motion of emotional cleansing, flushed only by the act of forgiveness. I had to learn that forgiving is a choice I make - a gift I give to somebody even if they don't deserve it. I had to heal my heart from blame by forgiving myself, as well as forgiving others who weren't to blame in the first place.

This was really hard for me. But I wanted this heartfelt birth no matter what, and I had to pay the price. I had been blaming my ex-husband for

first whisking me off the dance floor and then again for flagging down the cop who ran red lights to get me to a hospital where I endured a c-section.

And I had been blaming the take-charge woman whose cottage I borrowed while giving birth to Jasmine. The cycle of blame had to stop some time.

And NOW was the time.

I had a vested interest in blame. It kept me free from self- responsibility.

In The Celestine Prophecy James Redfield writes, "Subtle and ever-present, core beliefs are invisible determining factors in our lives. These thoughts imperceptibly organize our internal field and determine our continuing reality."

Working with the twelve steps for personal empowerment originally created by members of Alcoholics Anonymous, I recognized my seeming powerlessness over the compulsion to blame. With pen in hand, I made a list of all the people, places, and institutions I had blamed for my past birth experiences.

I set out to make the contacts necessary for my healing. It wasn't easy nor was it impossible. I had a bigger YES burning inside. I felt so empowered and light-hearted after making these amends, and was surprised at the gravity of weight that had accompanied my previous grudges.

With diligence to weeding my mental garden throughout this third pregnancy, the only fear that remained was a concern for environmental cleanliness at the time of Matthew's birth. Each story of unassisted homebirth I had read about included the component of sterile sheets, sterilized scissors, rubbing alcohol, etc. Was this really necessary? My intuition whispered NO. Then I thought about all the primal women on the planet who, on this very day, were giving birth near rice paddies or wherever else their daily tasks took them. I reflected on the mother cat who brings her litter into a world of old clothes in a wicker basket, or the dreamy-eyed mare whose foal drops gently to an un-sterile ground. I concluded my usual standard of domestic cleanliness was sufficient.

For a couple of days I went in and out of labor. My contractions were extremely pleasant and affirming to my heart. I was indeed heading in to the luxury of my dream birth. As a way to increase my tolerance for physical intensity - and to protect my perineum from tearing this time - I massaged myself with olive oil and, via this gentle stimulation, enjoyed several wonderful orgasms throughout the day.

After putting my girls to bed for the night, I poured a glass of organic grape juice and curled up in my overstuffed rocker. Staring out at the magnificent ocean view, I resumed perineal massage and reached orgasm with every contraction. Nothing in my life had ever compared to this moment in time. In my journal I wrote, "I'm massaging myself with olive oil and enjoying the most expansive orgasms I have ever known. Sex has never compared to the sensual pleasure I am experiencing right now. Each uterine hug is so big and beautiful. I love watching my belly rise rhythmically and then relax.

Matthew's hugs from my womb are truly one on top of the other, with little or no break between them. Damn, this feels good! I feel a sudden urge to take a hot bath by candlelight. Be back soon."

Within moments of slipping into the soothing water I experienced two eye-opening contractions that suggested I was much farther along than I realized. A sudden urge to sit on the toilet was immediately followed by the breaking of my waters.

I was confused. With my first two pregnancies my water initially broke, and then was followed by twenty four hours of labor. Despite my intention to enjoy a quick and easy birth this time around, I had still evidently hung onto the belief I would labor for twenty four hours after my water broke, as I had done two times prior. This did not feel like the beginning of labor.

All of a sudden I felt overwhelmed. I was treading on unfamiliar territory. I

knew I better make some quick decisions...did I want to give birth in the bathtub? Did I want to wake up my daughter's? A few months prior I had dreamed eight-year-old Sarah Lee was holding her brother's head as he was coming out. As a homeschooling mother I am always on the prowl for "real life" experiences to share with my children, so it only made sense to wake them up.

I barely had time to rouse my daughters from their slumber. We all hurried into the living room where I threw a plastic sheet on the carpet, got down on all fours, and observed my body assist passively as Matthew slid out quickly and, true to my dream's preview, Sarah lee guided her baby brother as he descended to the living room floor. Determined to participate in this magnificent event, two-year-old Jasmine yelled, "I'll get a rag and clean him up!" as she went running for the kitchen towel.

Moments later we all hopped back in the tub and waited for the cutting of

his umbilical cord. I simply snipped it with a pair of non-sterilized sewing scissors and didn't clamp off the ends - I have yet to observe a cat, dog, or horse doing so.

When we got out of the tub the girls sat in the rocker while I wrapped Matthew up for them to hold. As I was passing him over I felt a swoop, and reached down just in time to catch my placenta before it splattered all over the beige carpet. A trip to the bathroom revealed the rewards of my relaxed birthing experience...my perineum was COMPLETELY INTACT. No vaginal tears, no pain, not even a whisper of discomfort. There had been no pain throughout my day of labor, during the birth itself, or afterward. I was in heaven because the gates of heaven existed inside myself. My dream had come true because I had created its reality.

I was also finally realizing just how devastated I had felt by the perineal damage incurred with Jasmine's birth, and furthermore by the blinding pain

of my slashed belly when Sarah Lee was born. Now, instead of directing part of my attention toward a bleeding hemorrhoid-laden crotch or stapled abdomen, I was placing all my energy onto my peaceful newborn and my mesmerized daughters.

A few hours later we all crawled into our family bed and slept gracefully until awakening for our usual morning walk to the health food store, where Matthew was placed on the produce scale to register a beautifully compact 6 pounds, 14 ounces.

There were lots of rainbows that morning - or were there? Maybe they resided in me, thus that was all I could see. It was the most magical day of my life, me and all those other primal mothers on the planet birthing beautifully and carrying on.

Choose a joyously primal birth, then begin to weed your mental garden of

any and all fears that may separate you from your primal bliss.

Chapter 4

BONDING...Bringing It All Together

"All babies look forward to a womb with a view."

Ashley Montagu, *Touching: The Human Significance of the Skin*

For nine months our babies listened to the rhythmic activity of our heartbeats and oh how they love, upon birth, to be placed at our chest where they re-connect to the beautiful sound of mother's rhythmic song.

Human babies need to be held. We are a continuous contact species, biologically designed to feel the warm embrace of our provider, the tactile stimulation derived from touch. Postpartum depression is non-existent for the mother who clings tenaciously to her newborn upon birth. The biological

needs of both are intertwined and, when those combined needs are being met, babies don't cry and mothers aren't depressed.

A baby's cry is their only avenue for signaling a need to be held. They cry to be picked up. There is actual physical pain for babies who are deprived of the stimulation derived from touch. Society has a hang-up about giving babies what they need. We've all heard the admonition, "Don't pick the baby up or she'll control you by crying every time she wants to be held" or "Let him cry, it's good for his lungs." Wouldn't such a mentality then suggest bleeding is good for the veins?

The human being is the slowest growing of all species. We're absolutely helpless in the first year, save our ability to communicate needs through crying. When those cries are not heard, are instead reacted to with neglect, abuse, or tangible placebos like food, television, toys and other devices, then our babies learn to bond with an artificial alternative to the

human connection.

The consumer industry is filled with products that attempt to be mommy.

Don't buy devices to simulate what is real. Rather than wind up a baby swing, let your infant feel the rhythmic motion of your active body as they rest peacefully against you. Recognize the symbiosis between you and your young. A strong bond will take you through rough times.

I remember walking down Main Street at midnight on a snowy Oklahoma night. One-month-old Sarah Lee felt restless and I didn't have the floor space in a 13 foot travel trailer to walk her back and forth. So I put her in the baby sling and the rocking, rhythmic motion of my active body sent her into a sweet slumber while I enjoyed a moonlight stroll. Vimala

McClure, author of Tao of Motherhood reminds us, "A mother who gives herself completely to her infant meets herself in the dark and finds fulfillment. In the hours between midnight and dawn, she crosses the

threshold of self-concern and discovers a Self who has no limits. A wise mother meets this Presence with humility and steps through time into selflessness. Infants know when their mothers have done this, and they become peaceful."

Bonding to something other than mommy is fertile ground for a compromising childhood, a turbulent adolescence, and an addiction-oriented adulthood. My most vivid memories as a toddler were the many nights I slipped quietly into the kitchen, grabbed a hand full of white Wonder bread and sneaked back to my lonely bed where I sucked on slice after slice until I would lull myself to sleep. Such bonding to food has led me through a myriad of eating disorders throughout my life. We are destined to bond and if not to our mothers, then to whatever is within our reach.

Children have a right to their mothers, and a woman has the right to bond with her children regardless of her financial or relationship status.

Unfortunately the term "illegitimate" is still present in the consciousness of our culture. Single women who choose to follow through with pregnancies and end up on the welfare rolls automatically enter the lion's den of social disapproval, and their offspring are considered exempt from needing a full-time mommy beyond a certain age. Being born out-of-wedlock is hardly a disease that taints the potential of our children. Leonardo Da Vinci, age twelve and illegitimate vowed, "I shall become one of the greatest artists the world has ever known and one day I shall live with kings and walk with princes." Let's not forget welfare constitutes only one percent of the annual government spending, and I am personally much more interested in helping single women raise peaceful humanitarians than I am in motivating the military into building yet another bomb, or encouraging politicians to scout out other planets. In the June 20, 1994 issue of Time magazine the headlines read, "The War on Welfare Mothers: Reform may put them to work, but will it discourage illegitimacy?" Once again, the insinuation is being made that children born exclusively into the arms and lives of their

mothers are social deviants.

The only way to discourage "illegitimacy" is to encourage codependency recovery because, in most cases, mothers end up single by virtue of the fact that they repeat patterns in relationships that lead to the same results over and over again. I suggest welfare reform that teaches attachment mothering along with codependency recovery support culminating in a home business training program that includes a start-up grant or guaranteed small business loan making a bridge between welfare support and economic independence.

Not only does society create a wedge between mother and child by day, but night-time is equally influenced by cultural attitudes. The family bed is a concept in bonding seldom practiced in our culture. The western practice of placing babies in their own beds at night is at odds with human nature.

Given the fact that infants experience hunger at night as well as during the

day, not to mention the fact that emotional security for infants is found in suckling (oral gratification), it only makes sense that physical closeness between mother and child would continue into the night.

Simply rolling over to breastfeed creates convenience for the mother and comfort to her offspring. A friend called me one morning to say that she was completely exhausted from sleepless nights since her baby's birth four days prior. I asked if she was sleeping with her baby. She seemed surprised by my inquiry, as she saw no correlation between her sleep deprivation and the baby's place of slumber. I suggested she bring the baby to bed with her. The next morning she called me and in a most ecstatic voice reported, "It worked! I feel great! I just nursed him right there in bed and neither one of us needed to fully wake up. Thanks so much for the suggestion!"

Our babies naturally root for our breasts when they are hungry or insecure.

They might make little grunting sounds in their search, but if we are close by to respond promptly there is no need for them to come fully alert through the distress signal.

The two most popular arguments against family bed go like this..."You might roll over and suffocate your baby" and "You'll spoil him and never get him to sleep in his own bed." First, the human species would have snuffed itself out by now if infant suffocation was the normal result of family sleeping arrangements. Like all aspects of the modern world, cribs and separate sleeping quarters are new in light of our rich and infinite heritage in nocturnal togetherness. Second, older children eventually get to a point in their young lives when they want privacy during times of slumber. In part, it has to do with their developing sexuality and a desire for private time. When Sarah Lee was ten years old she went through phases where she excitedly created a comfortable bed in her art-room and actually slept there for a few nights, soon to be followed by another dose of the family

bed where back came her horsey blanket and angel pillow. Toward the end of her

eleventh year she began spending most of her nights in her own bedroom, yet she was always fully aware of the fact that she was welcome into the family bed whenever she felt the need or desire. It's fun to allow our children the free reign to travel what trails their hearts require. And it's fun to wake up to a bunch of warm bodies who make up the sacred family unit!

And then there's the insidious idea that the family bed is a hot-seat for incest. Nothing could be farther from the truth. I have listened time and again to incest survivors describe how an older or adult family member slipped silently into the private bedrooms of these children where nobody was around to protect them from the perpetrator's plan. The safest place for our children is right next to us as we sleep. The family bed gives intimacy a higher meaning as our babies and young children feel our

affection AND our protection.

The most common reason why aspiring primal mothers don't sleep with their babies is due to what I call "spousal pouting"...partners who feel threatened by the presence of a baby or child in the "parent's bed". Primal mothering requires the ability to defend the emotional needs and biological rights of our children despite any argument from others. We are not sex or cuddle machines designed to be ready at the call of our lovers. We are hormonal and heartfelt female humans looking after the primal needs of our offspring.

Night-time bonding is easily available because we all go to bed at the end of our day. But the bonding process itself is a round-the-clock responsibility. How do we meet our financial obligations, run errands, clean house, and pursue personal goals while tending to the continuous contact needs of our young? We see pictures of the baby strapped on its mother's back while she works in the rice paddies, but what does that have to do

with our modern world?

The concept of baby-wearing in a culture where mother-child separation is the norm creates the need to train ourselves to break past social ignorance, that we may embrace the simplicity and convenience of continuous contact.

People will always have an opinion to offer, especially the dangerous notion that we are spoiling our young by not disciplining them to be apart from us.

But the truth of the matter is that a most beautiful kind of discipline develops in our babies as they observe the world from their secure place on our body. They are calm, quiet, and alert. That's discipline.

Marsupial mothering, the act of baby-wearing, gives our children a leading edge in intellectual growth as well as a warm, cozy place against our body.

For my graduate thesis I interviewed a neurosurgeon at Tulane University who gave me this advice regarding my business of making and distributing baby slings. He said, "Keep beating the path because baby slings offer the

single most successful method for optimum neurological development."

The constant rocking motion derived from our active body actually stimulates our baby's brain, especially the part of the brain where pleasure is produced. This explains why baby-sling babies always appear in a state of bliss. They are!

Prior to Sarah Lee's birth I knew nothing about baby slings. My plan was to use a Native American cradle-board. But one night I had a dream that sent me in a new direction. In the dream I was exchanging the wooden cradle-board in for a beautiful piece of purple cloth to be used for wearing my newborn. Acknowledging the message in my dream opened my eyes and my imagination to the ancient art of baby-wearing. With my newborn tucked securely in her purple cloth - her womb with a view - I could easily wash and hang clothes, attend my college classes, lecture at conferences, buy groceries, sew slings for other mother/child couples to enjoy, type up

articles, clean my house, prepare meals, exercise and whatever else I needed to do in a given day.

In my cross-cultural research I came to appreciate the physical and psychological benefits of marsupial mothering. Cultures where babies are worn up to three years host higher rates of social peace than societies where babies are relegated to cribs and other non-human holding devices. Studies with premature babies who received consistent rhythmic motion have shown quicker weight gain. Rhythmic motion gave them the chance to feel in-utero stimulus, otherwise denied them as a result of being born prematurely.

My baby didn't cry. She had everything she needed: physical warmth, closeness, skin contact, the sound of my happy heart, nursing access, and the world in which to observe from her safe pouch. I didn't have to stop everything I was doing in order to feed her. I just hooked her up and kept

on going. The close proximity of baby to breast allowed for frequent nursings, which in turn resulted in a greater milk supply.

The primary prupose of my home business, The Mother and Child Reunion Project is to establish in mothers and newborns their rightful couple-ship.

These past years have been blessed with equipping thousands of women with our affordable COZY CRADLE baby slings, just \$17.74 postpaid and receiving beautiful testimonies such as the ones to follow:

"Your Cozy Cradle has saved me from distress. I really can't put into words what the 'cozy' has meant to me and my baby. It seems so simple, so right, so natural to keep my baby close and secure."

"I love my new Cozy Cradle so much! It is so lovingly made with the ribbon and teething beads, and I wear it everywhere."

"I enjoy wearing my 5-week-old son when he nurses. I nurse discreetly in the mall, in restaurants, wherever! And he sleeps so soundly nestled to my breast after feeding. I've found the Cozy Cradle works great when he's fussy; the movement and my heartbeat seems to calm him right down."

"Carrying my child close to my heart enables me to dive into this young soul's reality and know her needs, while being free to carry on with my own life. It is the best way to ensure mutual respect and love to both mother and child."

"My Cozy Cradle allows me to hold my baby close while I get my chores done. I can breastfeed her, sing to her, and rock her to sleep while my hands are free. She is easily comforted in her Cozy Cradle and prefers to nap in it. I like knowing she is warm, content, and not alone. This keeps us both happy, as she is held close to me where she can see things and I have my hands free, and my arms don't get sore from her weight."

"I can actually wear my twins! Now I don't need to choose one baby over the other. When they both need comforting, I can carry them each in a Cozy Cradle and snuggle them at the same time, while I still have the freedom to walk around and use both my hands. Thanks for making life a little easier."

Happily nurtured babies are content babies. Though there are many reasons why child abuse and neglect occurs, one contributing factor is the stress and intolerance a mother can feel when her baby cries a lot.

Sleeping with our babies at night and wearing our babies during the day creates such a peaceful environment there's little room for stress.

One very important beauty of baby-wearing is that we are offering our children a bird's eye view of life. Quiet alertness is their reality as they move with us from task to task. Our hands and arms are free to perform

those functions being observed by our infants. At present, our culture chooses one of two options: either a mother gives up trying to accomplish much and just holds her baby while awkwardly attempting a few things, or the baby is relegated to a crib or other artificial holding device so the mother can be productive in various areas of her daily life.

One of my favorite reasons for wearing my babies is so other people don't insist on holding them. Part of the bonding process is for my baby to feel safe in familiar arms, gazing into familiar eyes. With my baby tucked comfortably against me, people admire without insisting on holding my young. If they do ask, I simply tell them, "No, my baby is only family-held."

Postpartum moments/months are so intimate, and we are responsible for respecting that sacred space, regardless the opinions of others. People have accused me of being selfish and overprotective because I don't let anyone outside my immediate family hold my babies until they are several

months old; and even then I watch closely for my baby's reaction - taking them back immediately if they appear the least bit insecure or uncomfortable. These are MY children, and I must follow MY protective instincts.

I once asked a woman who ordered my baby sling what she liked best about wearing her baby. She said, "I like to wear my baby because then I am assured that nobody will steal her." This response was probably instigated by the sad fact that, just days prior at the local grocery store a baby left in his plastic carrier on the grocery cart was stolen while the mother was looking the other way. Such a nightmare could never occur in the life of a marsupial mother.

Plastic carriers and strollers don't give our infants the human touch they need. And for us mothers, it's far more cumbersome to carry one of those plastic devices or to steer a stroller over curbs and through pedestrian traffic

than it is to enjoy the physical warmth of a blissful babe against our body.

We just never know when having our hands free and our child safely secured to us could help save the life of our family.

A tornado in Oklahoma sent me running for shelter, belongings in each hand while Sarah Lee was safe in the sling. A hurricane in Hawaii found me wearing both of my daughters as I gathered up material necessities with my free hands and sought safety from our home's nearing demise. In both cases, my mental energies were freed up to deal with the situation at hand instead of feeling overwhelmed by trying to keep a handle on frightened, insecure children amidst disaster.

Bonding begins once we decide to follow through with a given pregnancy.

On the spiritual and biological levels we begin to form a relationship with our developing child. This is also the time to begin groundwork for maintaining the bonding process after birth. With our baby tucked

conveniently inside us we have yet to be faced with the challenge of accomplishing daily responsibilities alongside the moment-by-moment needs of a newborn.

With each of my pregnancies I quickly created a blueprint and worked diligently throughout those months of gestation to build a lifestyle reflective of my desire. With the cornerstone being my commitment to mother/child togetherness, the construction of a lifestyle conducive to primal mothering went smoothly and the finished product was always forthcoming.

For instance, when I moved to Hawaii in preparation for my second birth, I applied for government housing assistance the same day I purchased a tent built for two. I invested in the future while tending to the present. The lady at the housing program informed me their waiting list was at least two years long. Still, I added my name to that list and continued to envision a satisfactory home environment for my expanding family, though at the time I

wasn't sure if that meant a cute little cottage or the eventual purchase of a larger tent. Four days before Jasmine was born I received a letter stating my name had reached the top of the list and we were now eligible to move into a two-bedroom home.

All dreams have a price. Maintaining togetherness with my children has meant sacrificing many things. But, not living my dream has an even bigger price. In all decisions I ask myself how I want the story to tell ten years from now - "I wanted to be with you, but..." or "I stayed with you, no matter what."

Primal mothering is a crash course in values clarification. I am faced with making choices at every turn, choices that will mold the future reality of my family. Staying loyal to my policy of togetherness brings about tremendous feelings of confidence, despite the environmental discomfort we occasionally know.

A path always seems to be made, so long as I keep true to my commitment. The following message from German philosopher Johann Wolfgang von Goethe eloquently emphasizes the attitude I came to adopt, in order to live my dream on a daily basis...

"Until one is committed there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness.

Concerning all acts of initiative there is one elementary truth, the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans:

That the moment one definitely commits oneself, then providence moves too.

All sorts of things occur to help one

that would otherwise never have occurred.

A whole stream of events issues from the decision,

raising in one's favor all manner

of unforeseen incidents and meetings

and material assistance,

which no wo/man could have dreamt would have come

her/his way."

Many times, what appeared to be obstacles turned out to be opportunities

that led me into more enjoyable dimensions of living. During my college

days, with two classes remaining to complete graduate school I encountered

resistance from a professor who - unlike those professors for two years prior

- refused to allow my baby-wearing self into his class. I was placed in a

position of making a choice between my upcoming graduate degree or

maintaining the mother/child bond. With Sarah Lee at my breast, serenity in

my heart, and faith in our future I turned away from the choice to

compromise, walked out of the professor's office, glided down the thick wooden steps of the social science building, and strode confidently away from the university.

Three days later, while reading the best-selling book FIT FOR LIFE I learned of a doctoral program in Natural Nutrition that could be achieved, in most part, through correspondence. Upon applying to the Life Science Institute at Austin, Texas and submitting my graduate thesis I soon heard back from the president, T.C. Fry. This honorable man was so impressed with my thesis that he offered me a full tuition scholarship along with a writing assistantship for developing a Natural Mothering curriculum.

My future reality would have been COMPLETELY different, not to mention vividly compromising had I opted to adhere to the condescending demands of that professor and obediently turned little Sarah Lee over to someone else while attending his mandatory classes. Yes, Richard Bach, it's

true...the only thing that shatters dreams is compromise.

Another interesting turn of events that came my way via honoring
togetherness - the cornerstone of primal mothering - was when I gave up
what little help I was getting from public assistance. When Sarah Lee was
just a toddler it was mandatory that I enter a work-training program whereby
I was to place my daughter in day-care eight hours daily for a week while I
was to attend this workshop. At the time I was working diligently on my
graduate thesis, building my baby sling business, and writing articles for
various mothering publications along with feeding the vision for writing this
book. Despite my heroic efforts at developing a solid financial base, the
welfare worker insisted my responsibility rested in entering the work-force as
soon as possible. Sensing the coldness of this woman, Sarah Lee crawled
into my lap and sought comfort in nursing, to which the worker responded,
"And you better wean that child because we ARE going to put you out on
a

job!"

Our housing was on the line. Without welfare's financial assistance I would not be able to pay rent. I LIKED having a roof over our head, but I LOVED being with my child.

I thanked the welfare worker for what assistance I had thus far received, drove over to the realty office where I gave notice on my apartment, and went home to sew up a hefty supply of baby slings, change the oil in my car, pack up our belongings, and set forth on an adventure that led us through three months of delightful travel. We drove throughout the southwestern states selling baby slings to mother we met along the way. We thoroughly enjoyed the priority of our relationship despite the fact that never once did we have more than a quarter of a tank of gas in the car or \$5.00 in my pocket. We were literally fueled on faith, while managing to keep our fruit bowl filled.

We need welfare reform that takes into consideration both the bonding needs of children and the career needs of women. There is great social hostility toward mothers who choose welfare as an avenue of support. Even the welfare workers themselves often exude a condescending attitude toward those of us seeking assistance. Welfare needs to move away from a punitive attitude and instead adopt an encouraging vision for its recipients. For instance, rather than handicap female graduate students by considering them "work eligible" because they hold an undergraduate degree, instead encourage mothers to remain on welfare and pursue higher levels of education that can ultimately place them in higher paying and more rewarding careers. Any financial assistance program holding the idea that a toddler is old enough to be separated from us is not taking into account the true needs of our upright and walking older babies.

A primal mother does what it takes to stay with her young, like that

Mexican woman whose collection can was in charge of procuring family finances while her baby held firm to his rightful place.

Perhaps the most joyful benefit of togetherness is the store-house of memories that become inscribed on the family script. Sarah Lee and I are especially fond of the warm, fuzzy feelings we get over the "curb-side canned corn" memory when sometimes that was the only meal we could afford. Our financially hardest times came during those months when we lived on the beaches of Hawaii. Without a sewing machine, I could not make and sell baby sings. Sarah Lee took it upon herself to get up early in the morning, paint beautiful pictures, then go sell them to the tourists who visited the beach near where our tent was pitched. This six-year-old entrepreneur and devoted family member was averaging five follars a day! After replenishing her art supplies, she put the rest in my purse for our daily trip to the nearest store more than two miles away. There, we bought two cans of corn and sat on the curb-side. Using our trusty knife, we

opened those prized

packages and proceeded to relish each sweet and succulent morsel of that meal. To this day, the mere sight of a can of corn melts my heart to the core!

Another benefit to following our dreams is the positive impact it inevitably has on others. We become a role model of conviction, a light that shows the way for others who consider living a life of commitment rather than merely an existence of compromise. I often think of my friend who sadly weaned her infant and went back to work as a breastfeeding advocate for the WIC program. She was in a position to make some positive changes for the future of mothers and children had she chosen a path different than day-care. How different the rippling effects would have been, had she tucked her sweet deserving daughter into a sling and reported back to work. Her mothering convictions amidst career competency could have influenced her co-workers, government policy, social consciousness, and thus the world

at large. Instead, she fanned the notion that mother-child separation was inevitable. It's a supply and demand world out there. If we demand a society

where the needs of our children are included in all decision-making, then we will ultimately be supplied with an environment conducive to primal mothering. I envision a future where all architectural blueprints include the needs of mothers and their children. Sound-proof enclosures in college classrooms where mothers can hear the lecture while rocking their babies. Public restrooms with little sinks and toilet seats along with changing tables and rocking chairs. Recovery groups with play areas for children of all ages.

How did society get to the place where handing over our babies is the norm? Maybe it's a sad by-product of the way we hand over our pregnancies and our births. Do you remember being told as a child not to disturb the freshly-hatched birdlings, or the family cat with her new litter of

kittens? Do you remember why? That the mothers might abandon their young if they smell the scent of another on their offspring...

When strangers surround us during birth and then remove our newborn from our sight, smell, and touch: when still more strangers scrub away the primal scent of our baby's natural sweet covering known as vernix, and when these strangers return our baby to us many minutes or even hours later...this is a gross act of interference with the postnatal bonding process.

As primal mothers we are assigned the task of protecting the mother/child bond through all its stages. Finances are obviously one of the biggest obstacles we face, since the business world does not invite our children to the work-place. A great option to consider is creating a home business. I started my baby sling business by collecting enough aluminum cans to put ten dollars down on a used sewing machine. I sewed up one sling, sold it to a friend who requested it for her infant son, then used her payment to

buy enough fabric to make two more slings that sold at the next La Leche League meeting. Within a month the sewing machine was paid off and I had enough profit to pay for an ad in La Leche League's bi-monthly magazine, New Beginnings. Today I am still happily in the baby sling business and have added book-writing, all in the context of raising my three beautiful children.

We live in a time when the mother/child relationship is being crucified at every stage. We need supportive people in our lives, people who agree with us that nothing is more important than the time we spend with our children. During the time Sarah Lee and I traveled the southwest I met with the staff at Mothering magazine in Santa Fe, New Mexico - a business play, by the way, that welcomes both their employees and the children of those employees. When Peggy O'Mara, the publisher/editor of this powerfully nurturing magazine learned that I was living out of my car, and therefore without access to electricity for sewing my slings, she offered me

her personal office as a place to replenish my supply.

In one of her editorial letters Peggy O'Mara said that, demanding premature independence in our young is like begrudging winter for not yet being spring. But so much of what we do to our children is a repetition of the parenting we received.

Just as a computer will only retrieve what is stored in memory, we must pull up the file on our past, edit where necessary, and re-program ourselves so future generations can enjoy a higher state of self-love and peaceful co-habitation. Each and every one of the baby slings I make hosts a ribbon of seven colorful teething beads representing the Native American philosophy that our decisions today must be based on their overall impact seven generations from now. Will tomorrow be the fruition of humanity's dream to develop into the cosmic beings we are intended to be, or a nightmare that continues to haunt us all?

I once had a nightmare that affected me so much, when I woke up I was drenched in cold sweat and frightened to the core. In the dream it was a rainy night, around midnight. A huge sign was flashing the words DRIVE-UP DAYCARE. I watched a car pull up to the side of the cold, gray building where a large metal drawer opened out. The women in the car deposited her two small, sleeping children into this holding-tank, tore off a ticket stub, rolled her window up against the rain, and drove away into the night. I stood there and felt nausea overtake my entire being. The dark, cold, and wet night seemed to say it all as I wept for humanity's fate.

Dreams give us the great benefit of changing priorities in the middle of the stream. Even a computer will ask if you are sure before deleting a file.

Sad outcomes are simply the by-product of repeated treks down paths that deny the necessary nurturing of humanity. The decision to govern our own pregnancy, enjoy the privacy of birth, remain with our babies, feed them

from the nutritious divinity of our breasts, wear them close as we carry on
in daily life, sleep together in a warm and secure embrace, and give
ourselves over to the primal instinct in all areas of our mothering experience
lays the golden bricks that pave the way for a better world to come.

Chapter Five

BREASTFEEDING...Best Food, Beautifully Wrapped

"It isn't that American women are physically different or deficient.

They either don't know it can be done so they don't try, or they are
in an environment which is unsupportive, even hostile, and they become
discouraged early." Dana Raphael, *The Tender Gift*

Human nutrition via the breast is a huge part of the bonding process.

Warm, sweet milk accompanied by warm, soft skin and tender eye contact is a fine recipe for feeling connected to one another.

In a culture where bottle-feeding is the norm, aspiring primal mothers must seek out both education and support. Even though nursing our young is a primal act, part of the process to pass down biological information involves an observation of the experience to which the species is formatted.

La Leche League International is a breastfeeding support organization that educates mothers on the dynamics of breastfeeding and offers ongoing support through family-oriented meetings, literature, telephone consultation, and international conferences. Because of this organization, a helpful breastfeeding mother is never more than a phone call away, night or day.

Whether discussing simple breastfeeding techniques, tandem nursing, or even learning to breastfeed an adopted baby, the answers can be found through this valuable group of dedicated lactating women.

When you think about it, no subject on mothering could be more important than breastfeeding. We're talking about the fountain of life, the natural flow of a perfect food that meets the overall needs of our young. From birth right up until the day they bite into a banana and beyond, our babies are assured of everything their little growing bodies need. But, without support from other successful breastfeeding women, we are left exposed and vulnerable to all the breastfeeding-failure horror stories so many women experience, not to mention the formula industry's multi-billion dollar marketing scheme to get our babies latched onto their meal instead of ours.

In the book *Unassisted Childbirth*, Laura Kaplan Shanley discusses the sad consequence of her initial breastfeeding experience. Her firstborn was not latching on properly, thus was not able to activate Laura's milk supply to the extent that "hind milk", the heavier and more nutritious milk that comes toward the end of each feeding would come in. When visited by a social

worker just five days after the home birth of her son, rather than informing Laura her baby needed to be taking in more of her nipple for proper sucking and better milk let-down, she instead jotted down a note on her pad of paper, then left. She returned several hours later accompanied by a physician and three policemen, informing Laura they were taking her baby because, according to the social worker, the baby was too thin and needed to be in a hospital for examining.

It took five horrifying days and nights to get her newborn back into her arms, a nightmare that could have easily been avoided had the social worker chosen to respect the mother/infant bond enough to educate Laura at the moment the problem was apparent. Once the correct nursing process was brought to Laura's attention it was simple to re-position the baby so he was taking in the entire nipple and sucking properly. Like Jonathan Livingston Seagull would say, "It always works when you know what you're doing."

I have been breastfeeding for nearly twelve years now, and I owe my success to my initial commitment in primal mothering, along with female support and personal affirmations. In the beginning I attended monthly La Leche League meetings in my community and developed life-long friendships with the members. I also grabbed hold of the empowering tool known as creative visualization. I taped a beautiful picture of a woman nursing her newborn to my mirror where it reminded me daily of the breastfeeding "reality". I envisioned myself meeting all the nutritional needs of my upcoming child. Contrary to the advice from many around me, I did not buy bottles just in case my milk wouldn't come in. I scruffed up my nipples with a coarse wash-cloth at shower times to prepare myself for the discomfort that recipients of horror stories insisted I would know. I even shopped the thrift stores for a post-natal wardrobe that would allow easy-access nursing in all situations.

Given the fact my first birthing experience was a medical nightmare, were it not for all my prenatal efforts at creating a successful breastfeeding relationship I know I would have left the hospital with formula in hand and failure in my heart. Between the breastfeeding ignorance of hospital staff and the formula industry's free-flowing disbursement of their wares, (for the specific purpose of getting us, as consumers, hooked on their brand), a mother in the hopes of breastfeeding hardly stands a chance.

Most of the women I talked to who were unsuccessful in their breastfeeding attempts were of the generation when hospitals adhered strictly to four-hour feeding schedules, separating newborns from their mothers upon birth, and bottle-feeding them in the nursery between visits to the mother.

This separation between mother and baby would set the tone for breastfeeding failure. The distress from crying for their mothers and feeling

starved on all levels brought these babies to exhaustion, while the stress felt by their mothers, who wondered what was wrong with this picture inhibited the let-down reflex; thus the doctor's diagnosis that this woman was simply incapable of producing milk.

A newborn is hungry and/or in need of oral gratification for the purposes of security much more often than every four hours, and the hunger pains of an infant are far more intense than those experienced by adults; a physical discomfort that further contributes to the distress that leads to exhaustion.

Sucking on a human nipple requires greater physical effort than does sucking on an artificial nipple, so these exhausted and traumatized babies were placated with bottles of sugar water and other horrid concoctions and, therefore, were vulnerable to "nipple confusion" when finally put to their mother's breast.

When these confused little beginners at life finally made it to their mother's

breast and sucked with the same ease which brought immediate results from the artificial nipple back at the nursery, nothing would come forth. They gave up and began to cry again. Such a stressful response to nursing then caused their mother to feel inadequate. An added problem to this scenario was the fact that whatever medication was given to their mother during labor and at the time of birth also affected the newborn's initial breastfeeding attempts. With these factors at play, the typical result was a diagnosis of breastfeeding failure and a future of bottle-feeding and formula.

Baby-led breastfeeding, sometimes referred to as on-demand nursing, is the recipe for primal mothering. We intuitively know when our babies are hungry and they intuitively root when they feel hunger, as well as at times when they need reassurance. Why would the female human be the only animal incapable of reading the hunger needs of her young? These last few generations of feeding schedules have contributed greatly to the epidemic eating disorders of our time. Between the crime of being

separated from their mother matrix upon birth and the neglect of being denied food when they are hungry in their first hours and days of life (even longer for those babies whose mothers held steady to the doctor's strict feeding plan) is it any surprise we now host the largest eating disordered population anywhere in the world?

As I've shown in the example of a mother who is trying to nurse in the inhospitable conditions of a hospital, stress is generally the major factor involved with any type of breastfeeding complication. I remember my first and only experience with what La Leche League refers to as a nursing strike. My air-conditioner had broken down on a 115 degree Oklahoma summer day, final exams were the following morning, I had a paper due by the next day, and I ended up having to stay at a motel for the night so as to beat the heat, type up my paper, and finish studying. with all the stress my milk wasn't flowing as usual, and little Sarah Lee was getting frustrated, refusing to keep trying since she couldn't get anywhere in the first place.

It was such a helpless feeling for both of us. I paced the floor all night, holding my hungry, crying baby. I finally made a late-night call to one of my La Leche League friends. She assured me Sarah Lee would not starve to death in the course of a night, and that my "let down" was probably being affected by all the stress I was feeling at the time. I gave up on any ideas of getting sleep that night. Instead, I put her in the sling and walked back and forth while reading my notes and then typed standing up, swaying back and forth as she slept blissfully against me. Come morning, with academic responsibilities behind me, my milk flow resumed and little nurser Sarah Lee made up for lost time.

Modern daily life has enough stress to contend with. We certainly don't need the added strain of societal non-support, but it's a reality that demands our attention. We must prepare ourselves for social pressure. Personal fears about breastfeeding, a partner's embarrassment or insecurity, our

family's disapproval, friend's discomfort when with us as we nurse our young, or the professionals and their expert ignorance...at every turn we are faced with advocates for compromise. Like the first time I nursed in public.

My then-husband and I went to a college basketball game. As I settled onto the bench, four-day-old Sarah Lee began to root. I automatically lifted my shirt. Immediately my unsupportive spouse turned red from embarrassment and whispered to me, "You're not going to do that HERE!" Just as I was preparing to defend my newborn against his attack a campus policeman came over and asked me to "Please refrain from nursing in this public place." I looked them both square in the eyes and, as if looks could kill, they each backed down and left me alone to feed my hungry newborn.

I am seriously repulsed by men who are not supportive of breastfeeding. Many of these non-supporters condone "closet cases", but they are highly offended when exposed to this natural act in a public place. I once saw a

television show where one of the male characters, repulsed by the sight of a mother nursing in a hospital waiting room turned to his friend and said, "Oh, how disgusting! Does she have to do that here?"

That's not funny. That's sick. That's a blatant attack on the innate rights of our children! I'm especially sensitive to this subject of male response to breastfeeding because I spent ten years of my life as a topless dancer paying my rent with the money tossed to me by men who were enthralled by the sight of bare breasts.

The human female breast has been stolen from its rightful recipients and turned into a sexual object. The American mammary glands are literally owned by a breastfeeding-starved adult society comprised of an unsupportive public, a multi-billion-dollar pornography empire, and experts on subliminal marketing. It's not just Playboy capitalizing on this cultural hunger. Even women respond sexually to the "public relations" display of breasts. Just try

to find an issue of Cosmopolitan WITHOUT the tantalizing effects of cleavage!

There is a particular perversion that occurs in societies where breastfeeding is no longer the norm. Somehow, the absence of sensual feedings that were biologically expected early on register as a sexual hunger later in life. It's a breast-starved population. Pornography is the prolific weed that inevitably grows in a garden of bottle-fed seedlings.

In our culture, where sexuality and shame are so closely linked, there's a double whammy that makes public breastfeeding even more difficult. As you would have guessed, the basketball game wasn't my last encounter with social resistance to public nursing. In college, male students complained about Sarah Lee nursing while I was in class. In town, restaurant workers glared with disdain as I fed my baby while I tried to enjoy their luncheon special. No better example of the displaced breast could be had than my

experience at a nudist community when Sarah Lee was just a toddler.

Early one morning, while dangling my legs in the swimming pool, Sarah Lee sat in my lap and quietly began to nurse. Later that day the manager took me aside to say that some of his important clientele (all male) had complained about the breastfeeding incident, and for me to refrain from nursing by the pool. By nightfall we were miles down the road, setting our sights on a more supportive environment.

It is true that much of the social disapproval I have endured could have been alleviated by the implementation of a nursing shawl. However, as a primal mother and social reformer, there can be no room in my life for embarrassment, or for acquiescing to social norms. There is no strength in compromise. Not only does an attempt to hide the act of breastfeeding (euphemistically called discreet nursing) exacerbate the already prevalent attitude of shame, but it also denies our babies the wonderful eye contact

between mother and child that makes nursing so special. If anything, a shawl strengthens the shame factor, teaching other women - especially girls who are heading into womanhood - that feeding one's baby is an eye-sore in society.

That which is observed on a regular basis is considered normal, which is EXACTLY why social exposure to breastfeeding is so vitally important - despite the glares and other disapproving stares. Public nursing will ultimately create a nursing public. As primal mothers we can't afford to be controlled or silenced by societal disapproval. The bonding process depends on our militant determination to give our children what they need, while we as women exercise our right and responsibility to play an active role in society at large. We cannot bow to this "don't feed your baby in front of me" mentality. I have learned to worry less about whether others are uncomfortable with my public nursing lifestyle, and worry more about being able to comfortably nurse wherever I go. For me, this means wearing a

wardrobe that allows for easy access. I have become best friends with the likes of skirts, pareos, shorts, tube tops, halter tops, tank tops, bathing suit tops, and short blouses. At any given moment, no matter what the situation, my children can crawl into my lap and nurse.

Another important consideration is the fact that children are born with the desire to play with their food. From the time they are infants, our non-nursing nipple at any given feeding becomes a play-toy. Primal mothers all over the planet have solved this potentially irritating tendency by wearing brightly colored beads around their neck. This delightful diversion entertains the busy little hands of their nurslings. Our COZY CRADLE baby sling has a looped ribbon with bright beads securely attached so babies can play with them while nursing.

Slings are wonderful. With our baby right in front of us and so close to our milk supply, we don't have to stop everything we're doing to nourish our

young. Once, upon entering a crowded Alcoholics Anonymous meeting an Indian elder sarcastically shouted to me, "Hey! You're supposed to have your papoose on the back, like they do on my reservation. How come you got that baby in the front?" To his public embarrassment and my primal mothering satisfaction I eloquently replied, "Because my tits are in the front!"

In this day and age, we need a sense of humor to go along with the courage necessary to raise our young straight from the heart. You just never know when yet another "expert" is going to leap out at you.

What little social tolerance there is for breastfeeding quickly dissipates as our infants grow older, especially if that developing infant is a male. It is a sad fact that mothers tend to wean their sons much sooner than their daughters. It's a combination of the "You're a big boy now" bullshit and a heavy-duty case of pressure from other family members that kicks our boy babies out of the mothering nest prematurely. My, I wonder if there is any

correlation between this breastfeeding fact and the reality that pornography's clientele is primarily male.

Nature would not intend for one gender to be nursed long than another.

ALL children need the breast for as long as it takes to reach satiation in his first and vitally important stage of their overall development. Primal mothers honor child-led weaning. It is not uncommon for a child who is old enough to read and write to need occasional nursing and additional nurturing.

My receptivity to this need in my children has brought me face to face with the Child Protective Services. Neighbors complained that I was still nursing Sarah Lee who was then seven years old. Evidently I had mentioned something about it in one of my friendly conversations at the pool-side. A primal mother has the tendency to talk openly about who she is and how she lives her life.

My behavior was being classified as sexual abuse. You've probably heard of various court cases across the country where nursing mothers of older babies and young children are being brought to trial for the same reason. I asked the two CPS officers if they were aware of the fact that the average duration of breastfeeding worldwide is four years, a statistic that includes nations like ours where we hardly register a duration of six weeks and only amongst a small fraction of children. Therefore, when removing from the statistics industrialized nations who have departed from primal mothering practices, the average duration extends to the first seven years of life. They left enlightened, after having closed the case, and offered to tell my neighbors to mind their own business.

I had a dream soon after Sarah Lee's birth where I was told she needed to nurse for at least seven years. At the time I had no frame of reference to properly integrate this intuitive message. My La Leche League meetings

exposed me to babies as old as two years nursing, but that's as far as my mind could fathom. Then I ran across a magazine where I found a picture showing an eight-year-old boy stopping briefly to nurse at his mother's breast while she was busy managing her fruit stand at a local farmer's market in South Africa. I immediately thought back to my dream and realized I was being given confirmation. I asked a few Cherokee elders in my community about their childhood experiences with nursing. Several of them recalled either they themselves or some of their childhood friends to have been nursing occasionally at ages upward of nine and ten.

Weaning is a process that is best accomplished when taking into consideration the emotional needs of our young. And, believe me, nobody else will take those needs into consideration if you don't. The medical profession promotes weaning and the use of a cup long before our children are even one year old. When Sarah Lee was just nine months out of the womb a pediatrician berated me for the fact that my child's diet remained

exclusively mother's milk. He went on to say that I was being both irresponsible and unrealistic, that this was not a third world country and it was my duty to take advantage of all the nutritional advancements America had to offer. Ironical that he was originally from the Orient. People catch on fast to the dysfunctional ways of American society.

We can potentially put the lives of our babies at stake when we choose not to nurse, or to wean early. What if there was no formula outlet and you had to rely on your milk supply for hours, days, or weeks on end? Though this scenario may sound far-fetched in our abundant consumerist society, let me give you a couple of examples where breast was not only best but, the only option.

When Sarah Lee was two months old Oklahoma was hit by a devastating twenty-four hour storm and the approach of a tornado. Huddled in the dark and damp tornado shelter for many long hours - with no way of knowing if

stores or other formula-dispensing places would be left standing - my infant nursed peacefully. There was virtually no threat to her milk supply. As long as I survived, she would thrive. Seven years later, two-month-old Jasmine at my breast, Hurricane Iniki swept over our tiny Hawaiian island like no hurricane ever had. Whole communities were gathered in public buildings to await the final verdict of this massive storm's rage. Bottle-fed babies cried all through the night and into the morning because their mothers no longer had access to water with which to mix the formula. Only one infant, in a building housing dozens, slept blissfully through that natural catastrophe - little nurser, Jasmine Kokee Halfmoon.

When the hurricane had finally passed and we all set our eyes on what was left of our community, bottle-feeding mothers were faced with the facts. No running water, no way to reach stores that were so badly damaged they were not able to open to the devastated public, starving infants, and empty bottles. These desperate mothers held their screaming babies while

watching the skies for military helicopters that were heading our way to drop cases of infant formula.

As much as I wanted to, I could not help those infant victims of hunger.

Their relationship to a bottle had clouded over the instinctive memory of a human nipple. They would have literally starved to death before figuring out how to get milk from me. It's scary to see how tenuous is our relationship to primal intellect. We use it or we lose it. What isn't embraced early on appears to be lost for a later time.

We play a potentially deadly game when avoiding the path of primal mothering. How sick, when society is more accepting of the screaming hunger of its newborns than it is of a mother satisfying that newborn's hunger.

Anyone who has ever had a taste of human milk knows the delightfully

sweet treat that flows for the sake of humanity. Human milk is composed of water, lactose (sugar), fats (cream), and proteins. The first milk, those few days after our baby is born is called colostrum. It's a slightly thicker fluid that contains 10% protein, which drops to 2% after only eight days.

There is also a high concentration of antibodies immediately after birth that declines rapidly after the first two or three days. Nature inundates the systems of our newborns with exactly what they need to be healthy, and formula industries cannot emulate this vital stage of human feeding.

Sometimes a breastfeeding mother will ask me how she can tell if her baby is getting enough to eat. The proof is in the diaper. Six or more soaked diapers in a twenty-four hour period is ample proof that baby is nursing properly and milk flow is responding to the sucking. For those of you not using the elimination timing method whereby you can see exactly how much your baby is peeing, I highly recommend cloth diapers so you can determine your baby's urinary output. Disposable, plastic diapers absorb the urine in

such a way that it is difficult to discern when and how much your baby has eliminated.

Occasionally a newborn will sleep for a very long period of time, not awaken to nurse, thereby hosting a dry diaper. Not to be alarmed. As long as a baby is receiving lots of physical loving attention, especially the kind of attention that is derived from being held in a sling, you don't need to worry about their lengthy slumber and missed feedings. They will wake up when they get hungry enough. As I said before, their hunger pains are strong signals for survival.

As far as bowel movements are concerned, because human milk is so fine-tuned to meet the overall needs of our young, there is little residue that their bodies must push out. Therefore, breastfed babies have fewer and smaller bowel movements than their bottle-fed counterparts. I also want to mention the fact that, as the newborn baby begins life and the necessary

process of bowel elimination, their first bowel movement is usually of a tar, almost black color and somewhat mucus-like in texture.

Another concern I hear on a regular basis is whether or not a mother's milk supply will continue for the weeks and months to follow. Breastmilk availability is based on demand and supply; the more demand, the greater the supply. This truth reinforces the warning to steer away from pacifiers and supplemental bottle feedings because the less our babies are sucking on OUR nipples, the less demand on our milk production abilities and the less milk overall. Child-led or on-demand nursing assures us of keeping a quality milk supply. I'm a perfect example of this natural milk-producing phenomenon. My milk has been flowing steadily for over a decade. And no, I don't consume huge amounts of dairy products to keep up this lactating momentum. My diet is comprised primarily of fruit with some vegetables, nuts, and seeds.

Putting children other than our own to our breasts is another misunderstood primal reality, one our society neither acknowledges nor seems to remember from its recent past. A primal mother doesn't deny a hungry infant her breasts, whether that child is her biological offspring or not. There is something eternal and sacred about serving the needs of children in our midst. This primal sense of responsibility develops in our offspring a deep sense of trust in women, knowing that mothers and grandmothers in general care deeply about the particular needs of any child.

I have nursed any child who needed comfort and/or food and find it strange that people can get into such an uproar over nursing someone else's young - have they never heard the term "wet nurse"? Have they never sensed the depth of sisterhood? Many of our recent ancestors had wet nurses during their infancy and beyond. Keep in mind that the bottle is a recent invention compared to the eternal herstory of the delightfully beautiful female breast and its sweet flowing milk. If I was a baby I'd prefer enveloping my

searching mouth around the soft nipple of a loving woman, than stare at an upright plastic bottle.

For those of you who don't like visits to the doctor or dentist, breastfeeding is the way to go. The more aggressive style of sucking necessary for breastfed babies results in greater jaw development and thus better spacing for teeth. Babies who are breastfed for at least six months have three times fewer ear infections than babies who are not given mother's milk; five times fewer urinary tract infections; five times fewer serious illnesses; and seven times fewer allergic reactions. And babies fed from the milk of fruitarian mothers enjoy an infancy devoid of any physical ailments.

Women who breastfeed for a lifetime total of two years or more have a forty percent less incidence of breast cancer. Women who have been breastfed when they were children have a twenty-six percent less breast cancer incidence than women who were not breastfed.

Breastfeeding also delays the return of fertility. Breastfed children are less likely to develop diabetes. Breastfeeding enhances intellectual development. Prolonged lactation results in greater weight loss for the mother from one to twelve months postpartum. Human milk lessens the risk of diarrhea for the breastfeeding baby. Breastfeeding promotes dental health. Breastmilk has antibacterial properties. Breastfeeding greatly reduces the threat of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. Colostrum, the first milk is a complete food for the newborn. Diaper rash occurs less, and diaper duty itself is more pleasant because the odor from the feces of a breastfed baby is sweet compared to the foul smell derived from formula or other non-human milk.

Human milk meets human needs. Formula is a dismal imitation, and cow's milk is designed to build cows, not humans. The survival organ of cows is their muscles for the purpose of running from predators, thus their milk is specifically tuned to building massive muscle. That explains why a calf

gains some four pounds daily thereby quickly attaining its large mass. By comparison, the survival organ of our human species is the brain, and human milk specifically feeds brain development. Mother's milk literally feeds the intellect of humanity.

This nutritional axiom sheds a brilliant light on the fact that, in just a few generations we have managed to decimate the planet and its diverse inhabitants. It is these same few generations who have, for the most part, been denied nature's brain food.

Our culture has a highly illusory relationship to cow's milk in particular and animal products in general. The osteoporosis scare is just one of many hypes used to convince people of their "need" for these foods. Why, then, in the country where the largest consumption of animal products occurs we find the highest rate of osteoporosis? The truth of the matter is that we are consuming far too much of the wrong kinds of calcium and protein, thus

poisoning ourselves in an effort to ingest what authorities tell us we need.

Let's not forget that the nutritional authorities are politically and financially related to the unbelievably high profits derived from the sale of animal products, and other foods such as cereals that are always accompanied by milk.

Just how long does breastmilk meet the growing needs of our young, and what happens next?

My children were exclusively breastfed for the first year, and more than ninety percent of their diet continued to come from my milk into and even past their second year with the introduction of such fruits as watermelon, bananas, coconut, papayas, and avocados.

Transitioning from human milk to the next step in the human dietary is host to yet another barrage of social myths and other nutritional assumptions.

Judging by my own experience and the perfect health of my children, fruit is nature's plan for the next phase of culinary delight. After all, a freshly picked fig or mango - according to all the senses - is as pleasing as one's experience at the breast.

Being the die-hard detective of human roots that I am, my search for nature's nutritional plan unfolded this knowledge to me as gracefully and penetratingly as had those insights about birthing, bonding, and breastfeeding. I was reading an article about primates when the proverbial light went on in my head.

The author was describing how baby primates naturally transition from mother's milk to fruit and that, in fact, the nutritional composition of primate milk is nearly identical to that of fruit.

FRUITARIAN MOTHERING...Paradise Found

"The plant-eaters still form at the present time, as they have always done, the great majority of animals on earth. The most highly developed plant eaters are fruit eaters; the highest fruit eater is the human being."

Dr. O.L.M. Abramowski, *Fruitarian Diet and Physical Rejuvenation*

There is a vibration in the word "fruitarian" that taps into our primal core, our innate knowledge of nutrition. It's the Garden of Eden erected within. Every mother can relate to the wonderful sense of responsibility she feels when offering her children fruit. It's the same awesome sense of responsibility combined with serenity and calm that accompanies the act of breastfeeding.

In fact, perfectly ripe fruit IS mother's milk. When our own diet consists primarily of fruit we can count on a healthy production of rich milk in all necessary constituents for meeting the needs of our young. As stated in the last chapter, primate babies go straight from their mother's milk to succulent fruit. And so it can be with our own growing babies.

Our children love and thrive on fruit, easily assimilating all of the amino acids (protein), calories, carbohydrates, essential vitamins, fat, calcium and other minerals necessary to develop and maintain the powerfully strong and agile frames that keep them playing hard from sun-up to sun-down, day in and day out.

Fruit is a cleansing food that delivers necessary nutrients in correct proportions to all the cells of our bodies. Fruit digests easily due to its highly usable constituents, and supplies our bodies with a high level of water which further keeps our systems from experiencing constipation.

Unlike the poor combinations derived from animal products and other processed foods, fresh fruits enter our mouth in all their deliciousness and activate the enzymes necessary for quick digestion. With fruit, the stomach serves as a corridor whereas when consuming the Standard American Diet (SAD), the stomach becomes a holding tank for putrefaction and fermentation.

The antacid industry would fold up within the month if our population embraced fruit as a dietary focus. Why? Because the poor combinations of already poor food choices creates an acidic environment in the stomach which results in chronic indigestion. The multi-billion-dollar success of the antacid industry relies heavily on this combination of events.

In contrast, fruit is alkaline upon digestion and therefore matches the body's natural alkaline state. Human milk also reflects the alkaline balance of our

human physiology, whereas cow's milk and other formulas are acidic.

Understanding the composition of breastmilk can lead us to insights about necessary dietary needs for the weaned and beyond. Human milk is a low protein, high fat, and very sweet food packed full of all the nutrients necessary for newborns to double their weight in a matter of months. Since the amount of protein we need decreases slightly after the first months of life, and the ratio of amino acids (pre-digested protein) in fruit is just slightly lower than that of breastmilk the nutritional composition of fruits responsibly carries on the role of growing our children's bodies and maintaining their health.

When my mothering career began many years ago I started transitioning to a fruitarian diet. As a result of this alignment to nature's plan my children have enjoyed superb health, and I have levels of physical and mental energy beyond measure. My emotional attachments to cooked and other junk foods have been challenged at every turn, but the reward of improved

health has always kept me going in the right direction. My book, Cooked Foods Anonymous is dedicated to addressing this issue of cooked-food dependency and offers a recovery program that is realistic, revealing, and produces fantastic results.

Finding our roots in fruitarianism requires the courage to address our emotional attachment to many culturally acceptable food choices. And sometimes that courage gets stretched to the point of confronting "authority" figures who cannot see beyond the cultural norm. I once had neighbors who called the Child Protective Services on me because my children were not receiving the kinds of foods these neighbors deemed normal and necessary. That night a police officer came to my door saying there was a complaint of neglect. He said he needed to look into my cupboards to see if I had any food. Having just shopped at the health food store that afternoon, I was looking forward to educating this obese uniformed officer. Upon opening first one cupboard and then the next, he turned to me with a

surprised look on his face and said, "Hey, you don't have ANY food in your house!"

I suggested he look down at the table he was leaning over. His strained leather belt responsible for holding in his huge pot-belly was bruising my food supply - a table heavy-laden with more than fifty pounds of fresh, organic fruit: watermelon, oranges, papayas, pineapple, bananas, apples, and figs. I motioned him to the refrigerator where awaited shelves of fresh organic vegetables. And then I finished this tour by pointing to the two five-pound glass jars of organic nuts and dried fruits on my kitchen counter. His reply, "But you don't have any milk or canned goods. I'm going to have to fill out a report and you will be hearing from the Child Protective Services over the next few days."

I called them rather than waiting to receive their call. After complaining about this intrusion by the ignorant officer, I took the time to educate this

woman about fruitarianism. By the time our conversation was coming to a close she admitted, "I can't really argue with you. After all, your children have never been sick a day in their lives. In fact, in many ways I admire you for having the courage to live up to what you know is right. I will close this case because there is no substantial evidence of neglect."

We literally have to fight for what is natural. Just today I received a letter from a reader who was livid over the fact that a recent radio show was discussing whether it should be legal for women to breastfeed in public. It is clearly time to change this trend of thought. Baring the human breast is beautiful.

We love to start our first meal of the day with watermelon in the bath tub. It's a warm, sweet, and cozy way to connect with one another before venturing off into our individual realities in the security and comfort of home. The rest of the morning is replete with fresh fruit juices and frozen banana

smoothies, adding whatever fruit sounds fun at the time. I also fill plastic popsicle holders with the smoothie mixture so that my children and their friends can enjoy healthy treats throughout the day.

In the afternoon I make large fruit or vegetable platters and my children grab from them whenever hunger strikes. I also arrange these fruit or vegetable pieces atop lettuce leaves, and we roll up our produce burrito-style. Children love to participate in food preparation. For the fruitarian child, meal-time is "arts and crafts" time!

A great step toward fruitarianism is to serve your family fruit only until noon. Make fresh fruit juices, banana smoothies, fruit salads, whatever sounds fun. Every morning when my children and I enjoy our fruit meal in the bath tub, we discuss our dreams of the night before and we give gratitude for our life and for upcoming events, all the while watermelon juice is running down our arms. Mornings are such a precious time anyway, which makes

incorporating the Paradise diet that much easier.

As time goes on, extend your fruit meals beyond noon. From there, offer your family a beautifully arranged vegetable platter with avocado dip. As evening approaches, minimize the consumption of processed food by first serving a huge salad, and then a plentiful supply of slightly-steamed vegetables. Or, better yet, combine the cooked food right into a huge, luscious living salad. The key to success is massive raw foods action. In time, the rest will take care of itself.

It is only fitting to end this chapter with a momentous event that took place in my home a few days ago. While sitting on the floor with my family and enjoying the sweet, buttery taste of avocados my twelve-year-old daughter, Sarah Lee who had climbed at great height to pick from a nearby tree smiled in satisfaction and said, "I'm glad we eat the way we do, so we can appreciate what we eat."

Chapter Seven

NATURAL HYGIENE...Human Intelligence At Its Finest

The basic foundation of natural hygiene is that the body is always striving for health and it achieves this by continuously cleansing itself of deleterious waste material.

This explains why the best foods for both nurturing and cleansing the body are raw fruits. These high-water content, vitamin-rich, mineral-laden meals pick up where breastmilk leaves off when it comes to feeding the body's cells including those more than twenty five million brain cells that make up our specie's survival organ.

Simply put, we think and function better when partaking of such a hygienic

food as breastmilk and delicious fruit. Our brains receive everything necessary to maintain this complex intelligence site that is one of the most highly developed among any species.

It is our brains that make our decisions, and a clear-headed human makes for better decision-making. A primal mother doesn't accept the advice and opinions of others but rather, she looks deeply into everything that caresses her primal intellect while questioning anything that does not resonate with her maternal soul. I love what Marilyn and Harvey Diamond say in their brilliant best-seller, *Fit For Life*..."It is time to take control and responsibility back from those who are arguing about who has the right answer."

According to the United States Surgeon General, of the 2.1 million Americans who die each year, 1.5 million, 68% die from diet-related disease...specifically heart disease, cancer, and stroke. Still, people prefer to believe they are hit by a disease rather than assume responsibility for their

condition of ill health. Even the doctors on whom society depends cannot save themselves from the consequences of the standard American diet. As reported by Laura Kaplan Shanley in her masterpiece *Unassisted Childbirth*, "Physicians have an intellectual understanding of the process of digestion, yet it doesn't prevent them from having one of the highest ulcer rates of any profession." In fact, the leading prescription drug in this country is for stomach disorders, and a large percentage of our population actually needs assistance from a laxative to have a bowel movement!

Society has such an obsession with food and with using the mouth as an entertainment device there seems to be widespread denial when it comes to acknowledging any correlation between what we eat and our level of health. Our epidemic rates of eating disorders that lead to obesity, malnourishment, and every other disease you can imagine parallels the fact that our culture represents a few generations of non-breastfed people. Perhaps a lack of satiation at the breast during infancy and early childhood leaves the adult

human grappling chronically and hopelessly to satisfy an oral need. This, on top of eating foods that are not only devoid of the nutritional elements found in fruit but also brimming with toxicity, creates a sick society.

Denial dies hard. Most people still prefer to believe they have been "bit by the bug" rather than accept the stronger probability that it was what they bit into that caused their health problems, exacerbated by the fact that they were not breastfed in their infancy and early childhood. Computer language calls it the GI-GO factor...garbage in, garbage out. What we eat does affect every aspect of our health.

Disease is what we feel when the body is in the process of healing itself.

Healing is the process of neutralizing and eliminating accumulated toxins and repairing damaged structures and cells. And the symptoms represent our body's intelligent avenues for removing those toxins from our system.

Natural hygiene is a nutritional science that places health responsibility squarely on the shoulders of each and every adult who, in turn, becomes a role model to the children in their lives. Natural hygiene blasts away at our complacency, our personal lethargy that leads us around as if we are tethered to the latest nutritional theory discharged by the food and drug administration. Thinking for ourselves and believing in our choices is the mark of a sovereign soul. To become a "Siddhartha" in our own lives is the greatest gift we can give to ourselves, and a most necessary role model of self-sufficiency for our children.

Like primal mothering, natural hygiene is not something we learn but rather, it is something we remember. The information lives inside our cells.

Human beings are perfect self-healing organisms. All of the wisdom and instructions for self-healing are encoded in our genes. True knowledge is available not only to the literate; true knowledge resides within our very being.

The dismissal of social beliefs within the context of our own minds is a challenge that we must take on. This exorcism of social thought demands confidence in ourselves, a characteristic seldom developed when we have spent most of our lives listening to and believing in the messages rendered by the patriarchal likes of politicians, popes, physicians, and pharmaceutical giants. It takes perseverance to break past these barriers that have been designed to keep us at bay from our primal intellect. All the self-doubt that arises, all the criticism we face, it's enough to make any truth-seeker frustrated and in jeopardy of giving up.

When we avoid the cleansing benefits of breastfeeding and a natural diet, and instead feed our children mostly cooked and processed food they tend to suffer from such maladies as colic, ear infections, asthma, congestion, dental caries, tonsillitis, and other childhood complications. Those youngsters who do manage to get past childhood without bothersome illnesses may be

met later in life with the more chronic levels of toxicosis that result in cancer, heart disease, arthritis, etc.

In the case of illness (toxicosis, to be exact), removing toxins from our system is an easy process that includes a combination of high fruit intake, occasional fasting, and exercise. As a nursing mother, I adopt an occasional fast that involves the use of watermelon juice rather than just water because I need to maintain my milk supply and my physical energy. Detoxification symptoms often include physical exhaustion, coated tongue, foul breath, body odor, fever, elimination of mucus, loose stools, vomiting, and aching muscles. Since my milk supply reflects the busy elimination process going on in my own body, my breastfed babies may experience detoxification symptoms right along with me. That's OK. I'd rather share the discomfort of detoxification now than play resident host to future disease for both me and my children.

Children detoxify beautifully on fruit juices. You've noticed how children lose their appetite when they feel sick. Sips of water or juice are their only request. That's because they are adhering to their primal urge to fast; they are listening to their cellular knowledge, in modern terms referred to as natural hygiene.

While doing my doctoral internship at a fasting retreat in Texas, I observed the natural course of detoxification in the cases of several children who were under my care. Rather than encourage a water fast I simply offered them as much juicy fruit (oranges, grapes, watermelon) as they wanted - and no other foods. Within a few days of eating fruit and playing hard, their little bodies began to harness energy for cleansing that had, before they arrived, been used for the digestion of cooked starches, animal products, and processed foods. They lost all interest in eating, slept most of the day and all through the night, and exhibited such detoxification symptoms as fever, nausea, runny nose, diarrhea, and vomiting. After a

few days of this intense elimination they slowly showed interest in sips of freshly-squeezed orange juice and, before long, they were back outside jumping and hollering and hanging from tree limbs calling out for bananas.

Their innate

intelligence had allowed nature to run her course.

Nature has a health plan for women that in no way reflects the present assault on our mothering organs. Breast cancer and pelvic problems have become an epidemic for the modern female. Because the body intelligently stores toxins in those organs least likely to cause immediate death (as opposed to the heart or brain, for instance), breasts and sexual organs are generally utilized for the temporary storage of toxins.

When we ovulate each month and no pregnancy ensues, the uterus then sloughs off the endometrial lining. The degree of bleeding during this sloughing off period is directly proportional to the accumulation of toxins in

this bodily region. It is no secret that vegetarian women bleed less during menses than those who eat animal products, while physically active fruitarian women bleed little or not at all.

When we use our breasts for their biological function our breasts are not stagnant and therefore toxins don't get an opportunity to build up. This fact is clearly indicated by studies showing breast cancer to be nearly non-existent among women who breastfeed for two years or more. The longer they nurse, the lower the incidence of breast cancer. A case in point...

Thirty years ago my mother who bottlefed her children wore bandages on her surgically removed once-breast area of her chest to catch the oozing toxins, while today I am breastfeeding and wearing folded-up bandanas to soak up the over-flowing milk supply of one breast while nursing with the other breast. My mother died from toxicosis (breast cancer) at the age of thirty-six. I am enjoying superb health at the age of forty-four...thanks to

fruitarianism and over a decade of breastfeeding my young.

We DO have control over our family's health. Diseases don't strike us, they grow inside of us in direct proportion to the types of foods we eat, the emotions we choose to nurture, the amount of exercise we get, the stress levels we experience, the relationships we attract, and the belief systems we embrace. Every day new designer drugs, and interventive medical procedures accompanied by - you guessed it - more new designer drugs arrive on the medical scene to further whisk our symptoms under the rug, side-stepping the true issue...the source of our malady.

Drugs interfere with the body; that's why they have side effects.

Vaccinations are a perfect example of this brutal reality. For hours and even days after our babies have been stabbed by a stranger in white, our babies exhibit severe symptoms of detoxification, especially fever and vomiting. The intelligence of their little bodies is trying desperately to

remove the foreign and dangerous intruder.

When my first-born Sarah Lee was just two months old, I obediently brought her in for the beginning of her youthful round of immunizations. The moment the intrusive needle went into her leg and a tremendous scream left her lungs I knew that this was wrong. Prior to that moment I claimed ignorance and I certainly didn't know I had a choice in the matter. I grabbed her away from the nurse and ran out the door. This horrible experience sent me reeling into research and I soon learned that the vaccination movement is a multi-billion dollar pharmaceutical gold-mine.

By now you must be getting the message that the owners of this lucrative and ludicrous pharmaceutical empire are in all reality the pimps who keep their prostitute physicians filling out those prescription pads and telling mothers what horrible nightmares might happen if they don't follow doctor's orders.

They don't mention the fact that cancer rates among children have skyrocketed since vaccinations have come on the scene, nor do they share the true nightmares that have taken place in the lives of many children just days after receiving a vaccination.

I knew a mother who continued taking her child to receive his vaccinations despite the fact that her intuition was screaming NO!!! She now has a severely brain-damaged son. His body worked so hard to rid itself of the toxic ingredients of that shot that the fever ended up frying his brain. Now, at eight years of age he endures countless grand-mal seizures on a daily basis, cannot speak, cannot control his bladder or bowels, and must be fed because he doesn't have the capacity to hold a spoon.

She's not the only mother who has cried out in despair at the damage done to her vaccinated child...

Richelle, after receiving shots at six months old went into shock-like behavior within ten hours of injection followed by a grand mal seizure with severe diarrhea and respiratory arrest. She is now severely mentally and physically handicapped.

Mark, after receiving shots at four months old began projectile vomiting, staring, and behavior changes within 12 hours of injection. He died within 26 hours.

Sean, after receiving shots at 8 months old began having reactions within 3 hours; swelling at the site of the injection, high-pitched screaming, projectile vomiting, diarrhea, and behavior change. He now has a learning disability with severe motor damage.

Christopher, after receiving shots at two months of age began reacting within

2 hours, starting with high-pitched screaming. After short periods of sleep, interrupted by high-pitched screaming, he died 21 hours from the moment he was injected.

Anna, after receiving shots at 15 months of age, was limping within two days. Over the next two weeks she stopped walking, developed unusual cold symptoms, a 102 degree fever, and was irritable, wanting to be held constantly. Over the next six weeks. she became totally paralyzed. At eight years of age, Anna cannot walk independently, remains paralyzed in her lower body, and has processing delays.

Ashley, after receiving shots at 18 months old, began reacting within 72 hours with a 103 degree fever and lethargy. She was hospitalized with kidney failure and encephalitis. She is now severely mentally and physically handicapped.

Kimberlie, after receiving shots at 2 months of age began reacting within 3 hours with a 103 degree fever, high-pitched screaming, and convulsions. She died of cardiac arrest shortly thereafter.

Joshua, after receiving shots at 6 months old began reacting within 6 hours with high-pitched screaming, did not want to be held, a 101 degree fever followed by a one hour grand mal seizure. Today he lives with moderate to severely mental retardation and severe language delay.

We have been conditioned to vaccinate our children and, at intervals, are informed by the public health department of yet another "necessary" vaccine for our little ones. Like obedient robots, most mothers show up just when their children turn the age that the pimp (pharmaceutical industry) told the prostitute (physician) to dictate a mother's participation.

Don't let the disguise of professionalism fool you. And don't let their

statistics persuade you into thinking your child is better off being immunized, regardless the risks. When sad stories like those above happen to YOUR child, the risks are 100%!

When I get letters like the one below, I am scared for the children who depend solely on a mother who is not in her primal power...

"Do you think I need to know a lot about the vaccines and the dangers, etc? I know vaccines are bad in my heart, but what to say to someone who thinks they stop death, doesn't that say something, or are they just dying of cancer instead? How sad, if this is so! But, would just as many have died of these diseases is the question. I need to take my baby back for her next shots in less than two months."

If our hearts say NO, that's good enough. Mother hearts don't lie. They only cringe when not listened to; and everyone suffers as a result.

While on the subject of women acting like robots, circumcision is still raking in the dough while raping our sons of their foreskin. And don't think that the only money to be made is in the barbaric procedure itself. The sale of foreskins for the purpose of skin grafts is a multi-million dollar business!

One day a woman called me to vent her anger. After much argument with her husband, she finally gave up in the defending of her newborn son.

She sat in the waiting room and cried the whole time her son was in the other room, strapped down and screaming while some stranger took a knife to his penis. When I asked her why she allowed this nightmare to occur she immediately came to the defense of her husband saying, "What could I do? It's HIS child, too."

I'm here to defend men in their right to be whole, and I don't want to hear any religious doctrine that blesses such a barbaric act. We must tackle

ourselves where we least want to look - into our views about religion and how we are literally shackled to the past and to the rules which continue to be played out from one generation to the next. My dear Jewish friend Lauera Kaplan Shanley, author of *Unassisted Childbirth*, has something important to say on this subject:

"I am so offended by circumcision that it is difficult for me to even write about it. On any given day thousands of men will meet in support groups to vent their anger over having been circumcised without a choice in the matter. Over one third of the active members of the anti-circumcision movement are Jewish. On any given day at least one hundred routine infant circumcisions will result in complications, irreversible surgical trauma, penile loss or even death. I have no problem with Jews circumcising their own as long as the 'circumcisee' is a consenting adult. A week old infant is not a consenting adult. Religious freedom is not about inflicting your beliefs on others, regardless of whether or not the other is your child.

Children grow up to be adults, and many, many Jewish men are angry that they were circumcised in the name of religion.

For those who say a Jewish circumcision is more humane because the child is held by loved ones and given wine to drink, Jody McLaughlin who is the editor/publisher of Compleat Mother magazine replies,

"Are you telling me that it is more humane to be hurt in the presence of those who supposedly love and care about you? Are you saying that it is more humane if a child's first sexual experience involving another human being is associated with blood, pain, and alcohol?"

As shocking as it may be to our western minds, little girls in other societies are routinely forced into a different form of circumcision - female clitorectomies. While the western world is condoning male circumcision with the excuse of cleanliness, other cultures are cutting out the clitoris of each

and every young girl, assuring death to the power of female sexual pleasure. I am eternally grateful to organizations such as The Intact Network who work to save infants and children from the pain, torture, and destruction of genital mutilation. We need to stop the horror of sexual mutilation wherever it occurs on our planet.

It seems only fitting that we should next touch on the subject of sexuality. One aspect of the anger that is addressed in support groups comprised of circumcised men is sexual sensitivity. Their non-circumcised counterparts are enjoying a level of sexual pleasure unknown to victims of the knife.

The foreskin acts as both lubricant and masseuse during intercourse, creating a highly stimulating sensation. As a mother, I can attest to this difference between circumcised and non-circumcised males because my three-year-old intact son absolutely loves pulling and stretching his foreskin, a gleeful pride in his eyes and a smile on his face. I don't see this self-

nurturing behavior in the lives of toddler victims of circumcision.

Circumcision is a primal wound that changes the course of a life. This crime, together with denial of the breast and separate sleeping quarters defines the initial sexual experience for a huge percentage of our society's population. Pornography is that party called together; the walking wounded who, addicted to eagle-spread models in magazines search out the womb where everything was once just fine; the walking wounded who, starved of the sweet warmth of a mother's breast stare dreamily at the sight of cleavage; the walking wounded who, frustrated at their inability to know intimacy have sex with strangers who will only do it for pay; the walking wounded who, angry and anxious for the hatred they feel rape and kill women and children.

Never underestimate the deep scars of sexual dysfunction. Indeed, these wounds have changed the course of many lives. And it is the purpose of

this book to begin licking those wounds that they may heal, lighting the way for a new direction and a humane new world.

True intimacy allows us to be ourselves completely: the screaming infant who demands to be held, the nursing babe whose eyes melt dreamily into his mother's soul, the defiant toddler who angrily defends her perception of life. If we can't be ourselves on all other fronts, how can we suddenly awaken to teaching a lover what we sexually need?

It only makes sense that the more physically fit we are, the more we can enjoy our sexuality. My sexual nature is greatly animated when I am feeling good about my body. When I like what I see about myself, it is easier for me to recognize the attraction my partner is feeling towards me.

Fitness comes from the combination of diet and physical activity. While fruitarianism offers us reprieve from unwanted weight-gain, physical activity guarantees the sculpting of our natural beauty.

Physical activity is cumulative. Every task we perform and every movement we make can have a beneficial effect on our overall health. Given the typically busy life of a mother, it is vital we incorporate physical activity so our personal needs are met in the context of daily life.

Throughout my first pregnancy I swam and jogged daily. When Sarah Lee was born I brought her into the pool and by one week of age she was resting on my upper back, clinging to my hair while I swam laps. When I jogged, she slept blissfully in the baby sling. Becoming a mother to three posed a new challenge for my exercise regime. I invested in both a jogging stroller and a child bike-cart. With baby Matthew in the back-pack, toddler Jasmine in the jogging stroller, and big sister Sarah Lee sporting her pink roller skates, I ran several miles each day. Since I elected not to own a car in the first year of being a mother to three I relied heavily on my bike and child bike-cart. All three of my children fit comfortably in the front of

the cart, and I had space enough in the back to accommodate children's books from the library, produce from the health food store, or whatever else we needed to bring on home.

I love sharing my fitness program with my children. When we're not riding bikes or jogging together, then it's dancing and gymnastics. Every night we practice our hand-stands, stretch out, do yoga, and dance to our favorite tunes. As babies, all of my children have especially loved for me to dance while they were snugly tucked into their Cozy Cradle baby sling.

At night, when my children are asleep I top off my day with a session of dancing, jogging on my bouncer, and a few yoga stretches. This nocturnal ritual in self-nurturing is my way of saying good-night to another beautiful day of loving myself, raising my children, and fulfilling my responsibility as a woman who cares deeply about the fate of humanity.

Chapter 8

HOMESCHOOLING...Befriending our Blossoming Children

"Doing all day what they love

lets them become their true selves."

Richard Bach, Johnathan Livingston Seagull

While watching another glorious Hawaiian sunset, with Matthew leaning over my shoulder from his snug place on my back and Jasmine enjoying each push of the swing we all counted to one hundred - that's homeschooling.

After we got home I read several stories to my three beautiful children - that's homeschooling. This morning greeted Sarah Lee with the responsibility of taking care of her horse - that's homeschooling. And they all pitched in with household chores - that's homeschooling.

I love to homeschool! It's so simple and so rewarding, as is natural

hygiene, fruitarianism, breastfeeding, bonding, primal birthing, and self-governing pregnancy.

Given the fact that our brain is the survival organ for the human species, it isn't surprising that our children are like thirsty sponges soaking up everything going on around them...which is exactly why I find it so important to surround my children with only the best. And I happen to think the best is in the home of our very own family, where they are embraced throughout the day by the people who love them the most.

History is stacked with many great minds who were nurtured in the privacy of their own homes by parents who themselves were without a formal education. Just to name a few who have reached their full potential as a result of bypassing the public education experience...John Quincy Adams, Pearl S. Buck, Winston Churchill, Sandra Day O'Connor, Isadora Duncan, Albert Einstein, Patrick Henry, Margaret Mead, General George Patton,

Astronaut Sally Ride, Theodore Roosevelt, Leo Tolstoy, George Washington, Daniel Webster, Alexander Graham Bell, Agatha Christie, Noel Coward, Thomas Edison, Benjamin Franklin, Douglas MacArthur, Wolfgang Mozart, William Penn, Franklin Roosevelt, George Bernard Shaw, Mark Twain, Martha Washington, and John Wesley.

There are as many approaches to homeschooling as there are families practicing this alternative path of education. Many organized religions have entire homeschooling programs which include textbooks and regular testing for determining progress, as well as private education institutes which offer home study courses. Because these alternatives to public education tend to emulate more the scheduling of compulsory curriculum than the freedom to learn, I don't feel that they create the necessary mood for true self-discovery.

I am of the "free-lance educator" variety. My children and I work together

to create avenues for learning that are mutually satisfying. We use our local public library on a regular basis and always find answers to our most recent burning questions. We have so much fun as a homeschooling family that neighbors have gone so far as to call Child Protective Services because, according to these skeptics my children couldn't possibly be getting a proper education, what with all the free time they have on their hands.

Isadora Duncan, the founder of modern dance was once quoted as saying, "It seems to me that the general education a child receives at school is absolutely useless." Isadora began teaching dance to neighbor kids by the tender age of six and by age ten, after convincing her mother that school was a complete waste of time, fully embraced her role as a dancer and a revolutionist. She owed it to the heroic and adventurous spirit of her mother that her vision of dance was not stifled, as it surely would have been in the time constraints and conservative personality of general education.

Free time is the single most important aspect to homeschooling! I teach my children to value their time to the extent that they are responsible for what goes into a given hour, day, week, month, year, and lifetime.

Homeschooling allows a family to clarify their values, then live up to those values, unimpeded by the ignorance which drives the public sector. It must be quite confusing, for instance, for a vegetarian child to be given ethical and health reasons not to eat meat while the teachers and school textbooks discuss animal products as a necessary part of nutrition.

My favorite component of homeschooling lies in the act of family involvement. Responsibility to one another and the daily contribution to growth and maintenance of our family system imparts great opportunities for my children to feel important and valuable. The family-oriented societies in our world today, untainted by the formal schooling mentality, enjoy a much higher level of sibling symbiosis by virtue of the fact that older children are

given much responsibility toward their younger sisters and brothers. There is not the age discrimination often found as early as age five and even younger, where schools organize pupils according to age, and a cultist attitude culminates as a result of reduced exposure to and tolerance for children of other, especially younger, ages. According to anthropologist Margaret Mead, "one of the most serious deprivations in our culture is that children so rarely have the opportunity to care for smaller children. Thus they do not learn the ingredients of nurturing to prepare them to be parents when their time comes."

Family responsibility includes management of home, health, and finances. Helping with household chores is a wonderful way to bring about feelings of belonging and value into the lives of our children. Helping them to embrace and appreciate the gentle, nurturing qualities of fruitarianism ensures their un-defiled childhood and a superbly healthful future. Helping our children understand regular and consistent financial outlays will contribute to their eye

for realism so that they may recognize consumerism from a standpoint of efficiency, sequencing, and the power of choice, and not to be left to "want it all" with no way of knowing how to make that happen. We can teach our children to use their intuition along with their intellect when making consumerist decisions.

Once again, as was plainly seen in the chapter on bonding, the challenge of togetherness arises. Homeschooling is a lifestyle of daily contact. Home businesses are great because our children can partake of the responsibilities and rewards of our family's financial independence. I think it's wonderful for our children to observe the dynamics of earning a living. In a society where private business is available for reaping the rewards of financial independence, it's fun to watch our children get the hang of earning a living. Entrepreneurship is a learned behavior requiring motivation and discipline. Promoting our service or product, replenishing our supplies, and managing our profits are lessons which can begin with something so simple as a

lemonade stand.

Through us, our children can learn the many ways to make ends meet.

For instance, the beauty of bartering. Public school economics classes do not teach our children how to trade anything but money. While at a second-hand store Sarah Lee, who was eight years old at the time fell in love with a bike which cost \$75.00. I didn't have enough money and told her that if she really wanted the bike, I trusted that she would figure a way to generate her own determination. I left her in deep thought and went about my business of shopping. Several minutes later I saw her talking with the store manager. They motioned me over.

It turned out that my determined daughter struck up a deal whereby she could take the bike home now, and contribute her time helping at the store to the tune of \$4.00 an hour until the bike was paid off. Sarah Lee triumphantly wheeled that lavender bicycle with the unicorn banana-seat out

the front door as I walked behind her in awe and respect.

Sarah Lee was just a few months old when I first read about homeschooling. The idea of keeping my child at home made so much sense to the primal mother in me I didn't question it for a moment. Still, I was scared.

How could I possibly be able to teach my children what teachers spend four years in college learning to teach? My degree in Sociology hardly rendered me eligible for teaching the likes of reading, writing, and arithmetic! My funny-bone was struck while asking that question, as it suddenly occurred to me that before a child reaches kindergarten their parents have successfully taught them to speak and comprehend one or more languages, to count, to use silverware, to dress, to use the potty, to swim, to ride a bike, to roller-skate, to share with friends, to enjoy story-time, even how to tie their shoe laces!

I was fast becoming convinced that, with little effort, I could include the 3 R's into my parenting repertoire. I had no idea just how little effort it would take! By reading to my daughter every day - pointing to each word as I read - she soon developed a sense of association and to my complete surprise, while riding at the back of the town bus at the curious age of six, Sarah Lee proudly and loudly sounded out each and every profane word inscribed across the metal backing of the seat directly in front of us. As she gleefully asked if she got the words right I vacillated between parental pride and public embarrassment. Everyone on the bus turned to glare at the cussing child sitting next to me. They had no idea what an honor this was, to be inadvertently invited to my little girl's first reading recital!

The most popular criticism against homeschooling has to do with the issue of socialization. It is believed that socialization skills can only develop in a school setting. My children have been socializing with me since their days

of preconception, and socializing with each other from birth on. Where do people get this notion that the steady dose of a large group of people makes for a better social human? On the contrary, intimacy is the foundation of loving socialization and the close, consistent, and nurturing contact between family members. Making love successfully does not require an orgy background, and socialization development is not defined by crowded classrooms and concrete courtyards.

The natural unfolding of our children is often violated by the academic assumptions and expectations of our culture. In Joseph Chilton Pearce's book *The Magical Child* he delivers to us a far more humane approach to meeting the educational needs of our young, simply by recognizing the natural unfolding of the human brain and the necessary pre-requisite know as play.

Play, which is the child's greatest intelligence, develops in the very act of

being played with. Telling them stories, singing songs to them, twirling them about, chasing waves together along the ocean's shore, and giving children of all ages the freedom to play together all day long, not just when some authority figure sounds a bell and dismisses them to fifteen minutes in a concrete setting...these are the ingredients of play.

When children awake in the morning, the first thing they want to do is pick up where they left off the night before and play, play, play. Getting ready for a school-bus denies them this biological decree. Instead, along with the overwhelming majority of children in society, with a few early morning violence-oriented cartoons accompanied by a huge bowl of sugary cereal, they head out to catch a ride away from a day otherwise designed by nature to be mostly about play.

Chapter Nine

MOTHER AND CHILD REUNION...Our Only Ticket Home

"The only thing that shatters dreams is compromise."

Richard Bach

Seventy percent of all American children under age four are in daycare.

One million children a year are hospitalized for brutal beatings by their parents or caretakers. Five thousand are killed outright between the ages of two weeks and two years by their parents. One out of three children under the age of sixteen are sexually molested. The United States has the highest teenage suicide rate in the world.

And the primal mother is accused of being over-protective! We must ALWAYS be in a protective mode with our children. Paranoia is a primal thing, and it's the ONLY thing we have to go on - unless, of course, we want to wait until there is enough evidence to prove our children are being

hurt behind our backs. By then, the damage has been done, the trust level in our child has diminished, and we are left with feelings of remorse.

It's not easy for women to rear up and growl back at a patricarchal and medical empire that is temporarily in control. I say "temporarily" because the only hope for humanity is the restoration of collective feminine wisdom and maternal strength. When the men (partners, preachers, physicians, principles, etc.) in our lives challenge our mothering instincts, it becomes our task to muster up the courage necessary to defend the innate rights of our offspring.

Many women are struggling just to stay alive inside domestic violence, and have no energy left to defend their children against the same. Every year thousands of women die at the hands of their lovers. Women who are caught in this trap live between the extremes of running away with their children and returning to the scene of the crime. Statistics show that

women tend to leave an average of eleven times before finally getting out, dead or alive. Their children witness this horrendous behavior and assimilate it as the norm. Little chance do they have of creating a life different than what they have endured. Girls grow up to be subservient, and that stance of subservience brings out the bully in the men they attract. And the vicious cycle carries itself into yet another generation.

As primal mothers, we have the grand opportunity to be a role model of strength for our children, not a role model of submission. The only authority in our mothering career lives inside the messages dictated by our hearts. Question all others who claim authority, and stop questioning the true authority which makes no claims. It knows. Just like an elephant doesn't need to question its massive strength, neither do we need to question the value of information emanating from our hearts.

Primal mothering is non-negotiable. It just is. When we hear ourselves

say, "I'd love to, but my husband..." we need to stop long enough to remember exactly who we are in the life of our children. We are the she-bears with biologically directed orders. We are the drivers of this vehicle called the human experience. We are the solution to this sad world. And right now we need to plunge in and protect our children from drowning in a sea of social neglect, domestic violence, educational brain-training, and medical abuse.

If your religion tells you that that man is the head of the household, then you better start questioning your religion. Males have their part to play in it, but decision-making needs to be up to women. These are our children, born of our womb from eggs we were born with. Our children deserve no less than what nature planned for them - a primal mother who listens to the dictates of her heart.

If your employer tells you that you can't return with your newborn, challenge

such rhetoric. Women have brought humanity through infinity with children in tow. No job is impossible to the woman who commits to primal mothering.

Joseph Chilton Pearce pleads, "Women need to take their newborns into the workplace. We need women's base intelligence in every walk of life."

We may need to shake up our external world in order to maintain vigilance to our inner call. I have been called a martyr, and I can see now that I am. According to Webster's dictionary, a martyr is a person who willingly suffers death rather than renounce her religion. My religion is primal mothering and, yes, I would suffer death rather than renounce the rights of my children.

Truth is an extremist, and clarity regarding that truth creates power. It is true that an emphasis on the male has imbalanced our society and, if we

want to change the course of humanity, our point of power is NOW.

Chapter Ten

I AM WOMAN...Hear Me Roar

"Females have just as much intellect as males, but their tendency is toward predominance of the intelligence of the heart, which works for the well-being and continuity of the species. It's a deep and kind of unknown, almost mysterious thing, which worries males."

Joseph Chilton Pearce

We can comb through the history books in search of the roots to female oppression, but precious time would slip by. And this world cannot afford to lose any more time. The bigger picture will present itself as we go along. For now, our job is to take a look at where we are and do something

about getting to where we need to be.

We must stop perpetuating submissive females and oppressive males.

Instead of whining about the plight of our planet, we need to engage our feminine power and enact change, beginning with our own family systems.

To whine is to side with powerlessness, to roar is to live from our primal core.

We can't save the world until we have first saved the very soldiers needed to save the world - women. To bring the feminine touch back to humanity is to bring humanity back to itself. It takes a lot of courage to heal from submissiveness. It takes developing a belief in ourselves after generations of genetic encoding that we are the inferior gender, incapable of making valuable decisions. Keep in mind, it wasn't that many years ago when women were not allowed to vote!

How interesting that the word "coddle" means to cook in water just below the boiling point. When we coddle the men in our lives, when we silently go along with things that our heart is dead-against, we are creating relationships that live just below the boiling point. Simmering turns to resentment and the next thing we know, we are angry over the littlest things. Many failed relationships have women admitting that they finally reached their boiling point and men saying, "I don't know what happened!"

What happened is we didn't stand up for how we really felt. We allowed ourselves to be lost in the confusion of agreeing for the sake of avoiding confrontation. How can we step out of this submissive behavior? One step at a time, remembering that the first step is always the hardest to take; it's the leap of faith. Faith that we can make our lives better by virtue of listening to our hearts.

The first step is to ascertain a level of safety in our home. If self-assertion

will be met with physical violence, then we may need to vote with our feet and walk away. I walked away on the night of my four-year wedding anniversary. My then husband decided to turn his nose up at my special vegetarian dinner, leave our baby girl crying after him, and drive off with his drinking buddies for a game of basketball and a night of partying. After nursing Sarah Lee to sleep, I sat looking out at the late-night sky, knowing this anniversary would end in the violence which always accompanied his drinking bouts. I meditated deeply on my situation, then came to the conclusion that I had no intention of enduring another miserable wedding anniversary. At midnight, I packed my most valuable possessions, wrapped sleeping Sarah Lee in a blanket and placed her in the car-seat, then drove away from my marriage. My life could not truly begin until the nightmare had ended. My leap of faith that life could be better, if I only was willing to take the plunge, taught me that a woman and children are better off in a car contemplating their next step than in a home where fear runs the show.

Bringing our womanhood to the surface requires a dedication to the cause.

The world cannot heal without our complete womanhood. And our children cannot be fully protected without the activated primal mother who lives inside our complete womanhood. When we make this dedication to the cause of becoming complete in our womanhood we are sometimes required to make decisions contrary to emotional or financial convenience. Divorce is a reality that many women face. I never thought it would be a part of my reality, but then, I never realized the depth of responsibility which comes with raising children whose primal needs are being met at every turn. I had no idea all this mothering energy had previously been used to please a man. Now the time had come for this man to be exactly that...a man, and not another child who competed for my maternal energy.

How do we begin this process of transferring our energies back onto our children? By first becoming presumptuous. Let's presume we are right

about what our mothering hearts are telling us. Let's presume men have the strength to survive being challenged. Let's presume only good can come from practicing primal mothering and living up to our total womanhood.

Next, let's get arrogant. According to Webster's dictionary, arrogance is self-importance. Let's develop so much self-importance we can finally see how important we are to the salvation of humanity.

Tonight, thousands upon thousands of our sisters are going to look into the dying eyes of their starving children. It doesn't matter why. It only matters that it is happening. It's time to change the channel on male-dominated political games and start solving serious problems. It's time to start saving women and children.

We need to continually express the compassionate, human side of ourselves.

We must develop the power to stop being small and selfish and make a

difference in the world around us. By small I mean we must stop acting small in the face of such a large problem which humanity faces; by selfish I mean we must think beyond the comfort zone of not rocking the boat inside our own homes.

Global change begins at home. When we stand up for the rights of our own children we are throwing a pebble into a mighty sea where latent womanhood sleeps lightly, ready to wake up when enough sisters have said, "I care."

Dare to care. Our point of power is NOW!

Chapter Eleven

SEVENTH GENERATION MOTHERING...Harvesting a New Humanity

"When I look into the future, it's so bright it burns my eyes."

Oprah Winfrey

An attitude of doom and gloom does not light the fire in our hearts. Yes, we've strayed considerably from our human roots. No, we have not strayed too far. Were that the case, dedicated primal mothers - warriors for this wayward world - would not be bubbling up through the layers of social dysfunction.

To have a vision for humanity is to have an undying faith in our ability to correct, knowing that our corrections will be pebbles rippling out and reaching far into the future.

Sports teams are such a fine example of last minute corrections and the powerful consequences that can follow. Many important games have been won by teams who were behind just minutes before the whistle blew.

Having chosen an attitude of faith and fortitude, these team members regrouped and came back stronger than ever. As primal mothers, that's what we need to do.

AS yourself this question: If you had just five minutes to whisper into the consciousness of humanity the most important "play" for winning re-entry to Paradise, what words of wisdom would stream from your heart?

I love this question. It draws out a strength and compassion in me that is magnanimous. The entirety of this book represents my answer to humanity's homecoming. But if I were in the huddle and had only five minutes to encourage my team, this is the play I am calling out:

Begin at once to simplify your life in such a way that mother/child togetherness is the cornerstone. Remove yourself from all submissive behavior, including that which involves your lover, your relatives, the medical

industry, the food and drug administration, compulsory education, and organized religion. Wrap your arms around your blossoming pregnant belly, your newborn, your toddlers, your young children, your growing adolescents, and your grandchildren...reminding them daily that nothing compares to the joy of raising them into their own spiritual sovereignty. At night, while they sleep in this bosom of maternal security, wrap your arms around yourself - dear woman - and breathe in the fragrance of your own sacredness. Know who you are and live that truth with every fiber of your being.

On-line support at myspace.com/hygeiahalfmoon or peacefulsimplicity@yahoo.com and by snail at 4025 West Campo Bello Drive Glendale, AZ 85308. Voluntary donations greatly appreciated and can be received through my sister Lisa Reeves at paypal_ffreeves@hotmail.com or at the above snail address. Our Cozy Cradle baby sling can also be ordered through Lisa...please include color choice, height, pre-pregnancy weight and a donation of \$11.74 or more.

